

AUGUST

Labor Age



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Presenting all the facts about American labor—Believing that the goal of the American labor movement lies in industry for service, with workers' control.

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THE AMALGAMATION QUESTION

"TO amalgamate or not to amalgamate." That is one of the chief questions discussed at present in the Labor Movement.

It is not new. Off and on, ever since the Knights of Labor succumbed to the American Federation of Labor, it has been a "burning issue." Schisms in the movement have even resulted from it, De Leon's I. W. W. being the most conspicuous example.

The American Federation of Labor has gone on record in favor of closer organization of craft unions. But it has contented itself, "because of its form of organization," with leaving the question of the actual carrying out of such a wish to the unions themselves. The habits and traditions of craft unity have not been easy to break down. Unions which have gained advantages along craft lines have opposed joining their less skillful and less successful fellows in industrial organization. As craft unionism predominates in the American Federation of Labor—and as craft unions were the basis of its original organization—the move toward industrial unionism has been slow and halting.

Since the "Open Shop Campaign" the movement has made greater headway. Discussion has been widespread. Action has followed in some cases. Out of such discussion and action will undoubtedly come further unification of crafts—a spread of industrial unionism in reality

as well as in hope. The demand of the International Typographical Union for a closer grouping of the printing trades is a "sign of the times."

In the industrial battle the employers have progressively knit themselves together, as Brother Ziegler points out. They have formed employers' associations, which they used to good advantage in the last big battle with the unions. They have merged into gigantic corporations, which has helped them in their contest with the workers. The whole tendency of industry is toward more compact union.

That is the way that Labor will go, also. The birdseye view of the field given by the writers in this issue speaks for itself. It shows the inevitability of closer union—and also how difficult it will be to accomplish.

Unity of this sort will have to come from within the different union groups. It can scarcely be imposed upon them. Nothing can show that better than the series of articles in this issue. Nothing can be added to what they say—about the moves toward closer organization in general, and about the conditions on the railroads, in the metal trades and in the clothing shops. "Onward toward more economical and effective organization," is their plea, facing the practical problems involved—in order that the effort toward a more united front against the employers may not go up in smoke, as have so many efforts at "unity" in the past.

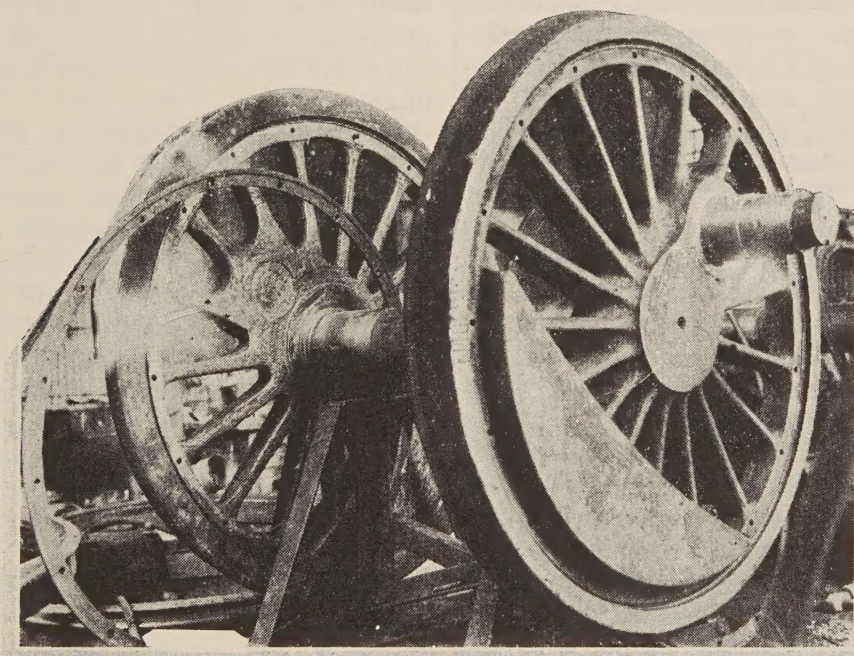
Labor Age



Why Amalgamation?

What Lies Back of the Demand for Closer Union

WHEN WORK
ON
THESE WHEELS
STOPPED



"Closer Union"
Became
Live Issue
After
Shopmen's Strike

Keystone Photos

AN ARMY divided versus an army united makes a pretty poor battle.

Labor, divided along craft lines exclusively, pitted against the Employing Interests, united industrially, holds forth small promise of much aid and comfort for Labor's cause.

That, in a nutshell, is the chief "why and wherefore" of the movement for a closer union of unions in America.

Industry almost everywhere is fusing rapidly. The history of American Industry is a history of mergers. During the past year fusions have taken place in copper, in steel, on the railroads, on the stage and in many other fields of economic activity. Where actual physical combination has not taken place, employers' associations have been formed, to carry on more or less efficiently.

This growing unity among employers and capitalists has been helpful to them in handling their undertakings and in dealing with their workers. It has been just as hurtful to Labor. The United States Steel Corporation is a conspicuous example. The National Metal Trades Association is another. This huge corporation and this widespread "union" of employers have successfully held at bay, up to the present, the onward march of workers' organizations. Both have, of course, equipped themselves with all the weapons to make their autocratic rule effective. Their army of spies covers the industry, to nip union efforts in the bud. As Henry Demarest Lloyd says, "A spy at one end of an institution proves that there is a tyrant at the other."

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The War on Labor

As time goes on, these new mergers and associations of employers become more active in their war on the workers. The National Founders' Association, in the foundry industry, and the National Erectors' Association, in the iron and steel and building industries, were in the beginnings of their careers merely bargaining organizations so far as Labor was concerned. But a little less than 20 years ago they became warlike in their attitude toward unionism, and began to adopt the "big stick" tactics of some of their fellow associations.

The League for Industrial Rights—which combats unionism on "legal" grounds—sprang up out of this increasing belligerency of the organized employers. It is open to aid any and every employer and employers' association with legal assistance and political activity. Labor will not soon forget its attack in the Danbury Hatters' Case, in which the "secondary boycott" was declared illegal and "punished" with the fullest rigors of the law.

The Open Shop Campaign helped further to line the employers up solidly with each other, and to show Labor what an immense force this unity among the business interests means. In the strongly organized printing industry, the Typographical Union found itself face to face with a pretty solid group of employers everywhere in its fight for the 44-hour week. On its side, there was not one but seven labor organizations—and one of them, the pressmen, were split up in warring factions. The battle for the 44-hour week, still going on progressively, has convinced the Typographical Union of the need for unity in their industry. They have said so in resolutions, calling for closer organization among the printing trades.

Joining Hands

Labor has answered these developments by looking toward closer unity in its own field. The American Federation of Labor has fostered this tendency—to the extent, at least, of establishing departments over certain industries. It has also declared on several occasions that it stands for amalgamation of craft unions within industries, as fast as these unions wish to join hands.

A number of moves have been made for "amalgamation" by different groups, since the Open Shop fight commenced. The Minnesota shop crafts, conspicuously, called for such action among the shop unions in the railroad shops. A number of state federations have adopted the idea in principle and urged the furtherance of union

among the internationals in closely related trades.

Labor, as with the employers, is drawing its lines of battle closer. Closer cooperation among organizations looking toward ultimate amalgamation of certain groups is undoubtedly favored today by large numbers of conservative trade unionists. They see that the facts make that a necessity.

They also see—and so do the great mass of workers in the Labor Movement—that this regrouping of unions can only come by an evolutionary process. The business of getting big international unions to merge is a larger task than merely wishing for its accomplishment. The obstacles in the way are many. The steps to be taken come slowly. Full conviction on the part of the membership of the unions that the change will really be a move forward is not the least part of the program.

There have been efforts in the past to form industrial unions which have not ended in a blaze of glory. These failures have generally been associated with certain dogmatic rainbow philosophies. They have gone to smash because they have molded the "facts" to suit that philosophy, and not the philosophy to suit the facts. Certain impatient souls, not satisfied with the progress of the Labor Movement toward amalgamation, formed the I. W. W., for example. But the history of the I. W. W. has been a history of failure. It could not win the support of the rank and file of the labor unions.

Foster

At the present time the amalgamation issue has been dramatized by William Z. Foster, leader of the steel strike of 1919. He has devoted all his energies to pushing it forward within the ranks of the A. F. of L. In that policy Foster is at least consistent, for he has been preaching for some years that the movement for industrial unionism and a "revolutionary program" should be conducted inside the Labor Movement. But he has allowed his Trade Union Educational League to be controlled by extremists, in whom the rank and file have no confidence. He has made the error of past "radical" movements by linking up with Russian Communism, as represented in the Third International.

His mistaken policy, so far as the welfare of American Labor goes, is seen no more clearly than in his recent choice of Ruthenberg in preference to John Fitzpatrick at Chicago. The rank and file are increasingly looking upon the Trade Union Educational League as a source of disunion

rather than one of unity. Its success depends on whether the American workers are prepared to adopt the philosophy of Communism as their program.

Despite the injection of this foreign issue, the movement toward more compact organization will continue as a matter of necessity. At the 1922 convention of the American Federation of Labor the representatives of the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks brought up the matter in a resolution for "amalgamation." This declared, among other things, that "the employees throughout the nation have solidly united, being bound together by a solidarity of interest and organization which leaves no room for divided action or desertions, and moreover, they are supported by the government, the courts and the press in any union-smashing undertaking they engage in."

A "United Front"

To bring about a "united front" of the workers to meet this attack, it called upon the American Federation of Labor to "take the necessary action toward bringing about the required solidarity within the ranks of organized labor." As a first step in this direction, it asked "that the various international unions be called into conference for the purpose of arranging to amalgamate all the unions in the respective industries into single organizations, each of which shall cover any industry."

It is significant that—with the "amalgamation" campaign on—the convention did not attack this resolution, but stated "that the subject matter contained in these resolutions is already in effect through the various departments of the American Federation of Labor."

The business of fusing unions in various industries will have to go on within those unions themselves. Necessity will compel it in a number of cases. It will be a gradual process. First, federation—and in some instances this will be a development lasting for some time. Then, amalgamation of certain closely related groups; followed by amalgamation within industries.

No Mushroom Growth

But this is not a mushroom proposition—and those who think it is, are likely to be sadly disappointed. Neither does it necessarily mean an increase in militancy or "class consciousness." Some of the detached unions are among the most militant. Some of those who work closely together are the least so.

Industrial unionism is not a new feature of the American Labor Movement. The miners, the

THE EMPLOYERS' WARLIKE ATTITUDE

"THE associations exist because of the institution of private property in the means of production. The institution of private property necessitates, under modern conditions, the relation of employer and employee. The employer owns, controls, or directs the means of production—machinery, tools, etc.—in the hands of the employee. To retain this ownership, control or direction, the employer has, from time immemorial, found it necessary to resort to some form of organization or understanding with his fellow-employers to prevent organizations of workmen from unduly infringing upon his 'right' to conduct his business and manage his property as he has seen fit, a 'right' necessary to make his business the most profitable one.

"Beginning about 1901 and extending up to April, 1917—the entrance of the United States in the War of 1914-1918—there was a distinct evolution in belligerency among old associations and in numerous newly formed ones. Associations that had tried the trade agreement were breaking away from it, and fighting the unions in many fields. The National Metal Trades' Association, which began its career as a negotiatory association, became distinctly belligerent in 1901. Citizens' alliances were growing up in many localities, and this movement was characteristically a belligerent one, but was in the nature of the case of comparatively short life. The National Association of Manufacturers had been formed in 1896 but became belligerent in 1902, especially in the legislative field. The belligerent American-Boycott Association, now the League for Industrial Rights, and the Citizens' Industrial Association of America were organized respectively in the years 1902 and 1903. The United Typothetae of America became prevailingly belligerent in 1903. The negotiatory National Erectors' Association began its belligerent activities in 1905, declared itself belligerent in 1906 and attracted world-wide attention in 1911 as a result of its belligerency. None of these associations now existing has lost much of its belligerency."

("Employers' Associations in the United States," by Dr. Charles E. Bonnett.)

needle trades unions, the textile workers and the brewery workers are all organized on an industrial basis. Merger of unions has gone on, in the past, as it will go on in the future. The structure of the A. F. of L. easily lends itself to this form of organization, if the unions are ready to initiate it. The present experiences of the workers should lead to an increase in the effort toward fusion, particularly in the next few years. It is going on in England, under the stress of their conditions.

"One union in each industry" is the logical goal of Labor. Industrial development itself, and the new turn in industrial conflict, make it inevitable—certainly in a number of workers' groups. The big task ahead is to work it out, gradually but surely, removing the obstacles that lay between unions of a like character—so that it may be, in reality, progress toward an effective Labor fighting force.

Labor's "Aristocracy" and the "War Babies"

Possibilities of Merger Among the Rail Unions

By J. F. ANDERSON

LET us begin at the beginning.

And the beginning of this story runs in this wise: "Once upon a time" there were four unions of railroad workers. They were not like other unions, but were rather like benevolent associations. They raised great pension and insurance funds. They rejected the strike weapon and other militant programs. In the constitutions of some of them the use of the strike, for many years, was definitely forbidden. They were known as the "aristocracy" of labor—more conservative than the most conservative organization in the American Federation of Labor.

These were the four big railroad brotherhoods—representing the engineers, firemen, trainmen and conductors. Their older members were, and are, innocent of anything remotely resembling radicalism. Many of them have helped in the great game of pushing America westward. They still live in those pioneering traditions. Their ideas are largely the ideas of the middle class, rather than those of the fighting workers. The man in the shop was almost as far away from them, in their eyes, as Dives from Lazarus. As for the unskilled immigrant laborer on the maintenance of way, "he was practically nonexistent."

Then came the Great War. For the first time these unions adopted a warlike attitude as a unit. For the first time, also, they were thrown together with the other railroad organizations. These are the shop crafts—six in number, representing the machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths, sheet metal workers, carmen and electricians; and the so-called miscellaneous trades, the maintenance of way men, the firemen and oilers, clerks, signalmen and telegraphers. (The switchmen, the sixteenth of the rail unions, had been for a number of years grouped with the brotherhoods, although it overlapped the trainmen's organization and was a member of the American Federation of Labor.) The good fruit of this closer, face-to-face connection of these unions, hitherto almost unknown to each other, was clear from the first. It resulted in the gen-

erally good conditions for the men, which marked the term of the United States Railroad Administration.

The "Jimmy Higgenses"

The shopcrafts and the miscellaneous trades grew overnight during the war. Two of them—the maintenance of the way men and clerks—leaped from practically no organization to a great mass of organized men. All these unions had had to fight every inch of their way. They were not looked upon as assets by the railroad magnates, as the brotherhoods had been. They did not name lodges after railroad officials—a common practice of the labor "aristocracy." They looked upon the strike, from the very first, as a weapon of the greatest value. They built up no huge insurance funds or benefit features. They were the "Jimmy Higgenses" of the railroad world.

There was another important difference between these unions and the brotherhoods. The members of the latter bodies usually remained with the same road throughout life. The seniority rule made this an almost unanimous practice. If they had gone from road to road, they would have lost their position in line for promotion. They got to be a part and parcel of the road. It was "our" road and "our" officials, many of whom were known on something like intimate personal terms. But the shopmen and the other non-brotherhood workers were largely nomads, "boomers," so-called. Their work was not as steady as that of the men handling the trains. They floated from shop to shop and from road to road. That helped toward making them militants—much more so than the brotherhoods had ever dared to be.

The "War Babies"

The so-called miscellaneous trades, except the Telegraphers, were even newer than the shopmen at the game of organization. They were "war babies" in the realest of senses. By the close of the war they had not reached the stage of unity in action that had become the "bone and muscle" of the shop organizations.

The shopmen work together, closer than any group of trades in America. They have grown to understand each other—although the old spirit of trade-distinction has not died out entirely to this day. But jurisdictional disputes still crop up among them.

Cannot Be Lived Down in a Day

The different history of these groups has, of course, led to a difference in psychology which cannot be lived down in a day. It must be grappled with in any talk of amalgamation of rail unions. The brotherhoods have never worked together to the extent of completely binding their organizations to joint action, as a result of a vote in joint conference. The miscellaneous trades are too new to go in, practically, for a policy of united action. The shopmen have worked hand in hand, in local Federations at the shops, in the System Federations (joining together the men of all shop trades on a railroad) and in the Railway Employees Department of the American Federation of Labor. The System Federations, when they decide to do so, bind the unions on particular roads or "systems" to a certain course of policy in regard to that road. The district organizations of the shop crafts elect representatives to the system federations. The system federations themselves, as units, send delegates to the Railway Employees Department. This makes up the most perfect plan of cooperation yet devised.

The outgrowth of these differences in viewpoint and policy was seen dramatically in the great strike of 1922-23. The six shop crafts went out as one union. The clerks, maintenance of way men, telegraphers and other miscellaneous trades—though hit by the wage reductions—did not venture battle with the railroads. And the brotherhoods contented themselves with sparring with the roads about the safety of locomotives and other equipment. (The wages of the brotherhoods were not reduced!) The roads themselves knew very well that the brotherhoods were not prepared for any effective action in the shop workers' behalf. Their whole history was against that.

Talk "Wise and Otherwise"

Out of the shop strike has grown a great deal of talk—wise and otherwise—about amalgamation of the rail unions. Amalgamation of kindred trades is a desirable thing—a very desirable thing. It will not accomplish all that some of its promoters claim. It will not go as far toward making the workers triumphant in



"AMALGAMATED"

The Miners were among the earliest to unite industrially their fights for freedom and for better things, as enthusiasts proclaim. Most of its advocates would lead one to believe that it would solve all industrial ills. It will do this, so they say, because of the strength gained through united action, and the use, or the threat of the use, of this power along economic lines.

There is no satisfactory example to prove what amalgamation would accomplish. On the contrary, there are plenty of examples of trades banded together in amalgamated units having the same hard struggle to advance the interests of their members as the so-called independent unions. The Miners union is a "one big" union of various callings. The miners have almost complete control of their industry. Still they are obliged to strike, and their strikes are not always successful. It is, in fact, quite doubtful if the last mine strike would have ended as well as it did except that the shopmen were out at the same time. This hindered the carriage of coal from the non-union fields. It also had a "softening" effect upon the administration, which made no attempt to "enjoin" the miners.

So far as economic strength goes, if there had been one union of shopmen the response of the men could not have been more complete. The men fought side by side throughout the strike as if they were members of the same union.

In advocating amalgamation, false hopes should not be raised. And most champions of this idea do this very thing. We should deal with facts, and base our conclusions on the experience we have had. After all, experience is a good teacher.

We do know that amalgamation of kindred trades would bring about economy in operation.

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It would do away with many extra officers, cut down hall rents, the cost of conventions and headquarters. Reductions could be made in the dues and assessments that members of small unions are now compelled to pay, to hold their end of expenses up with the stronger unions.

Benefits of Closer Union

Duplication of work by officers of various trades would be done away with. This would save money. Better still, it would eliminate the possibility of establishing conflicting policies. One group would not be going one way, and one another. Experience in the shopmen's strike has shown beyond doubt that all international unions will not yield authority to some central body and allow this body to direct their movements. This attitude of the internationals caused such duplication of efforts, that sometimes six officers were doing what one could do much better alone. Thousands of dollars were wasted and the conduct of the strike was hampered seriously.

Another important thing: Amalgamation will abolish jurisdictional disputes. There will be no cause for them. Battle royals between sheet metal workers or electricians and machinists over a certain class of work would not exist if all were members of the same local. Jurisdictional disputes have done untold harm to the Labor Movement. They have caused ill feelings among the workers that have spelt anything but harmony. They have brought us into bad repute with employers and "public," as a result of the useless harm done them—for which, in most cases, they were not in the least responsible.

Encouraged, Not Forced

Amalgamation, like, any other progressive steps, must come as a result of experience and necessity. It should be encouraged, not forced. It should be limited to closely allied trades, whose work is similar and whose problems and line of advancement are the same. Time and successful experience would extend it.

In the railroad shops, as an example, the start should be confined to the locomotive department. The trades there are associated closely. Their wages are the same. They deal with the same railroad officials. All their problems run hand in hand. Unity among them is a natural course of action, and can be attained in a reasonable course of time.

But it is a waste of funds and energy—and a misrepresentation of the possibilities to our

members—when we talk of trying to induce the brotherhoods to amalgamate with the shop trades. Such an event is not dimly possible. The brotherhoods are well disciplined. The shop trades have little discipline. The brotherhoods have resources of millions of dollars. The shop trades have nothing but grit and determination. The brotherhoods have all sorts of vested interests in insurance funds of various kinds. The shop trades have no experience with such funds or "methods of protection." That sort of "marriage" is one that the shop crafts must cease to dream of—until, at least, they have effected their own solid union.

Within the Brotherhoods

Within the brotherhoods themselves there is, and will be, a growing discussion of "getting together." In many instances, these unions greatly overlap in types of membership. There are almost 40,000 engineers in the firemen's union, and about 25,000 conductors among the trainmen. The trainmen and conductors and switchmen will in time unite, and the engineers and firemen will also do so. The latter unions—the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Brotherhood of Firemen and Enginemen are now talking over such a course. But a decision of the Ohio Department of Insurance, stating that their insurance departments cannot be merged, has thrown a temporary monkey wrench into this plan. This little incident shows how slow and painful at the present time is the movement toward closer organization.

One thing that will help to bring amalgamation on the railroads more than anything else is Government Ownership. At least, it will produce some sort of federation for community of action. It was government control which first brought the brotherhoods and the newer unions around the council table. In fact, amalgamation will perhaps aid more decidedly in directing united action of the workers along political lines than in an industrial way.

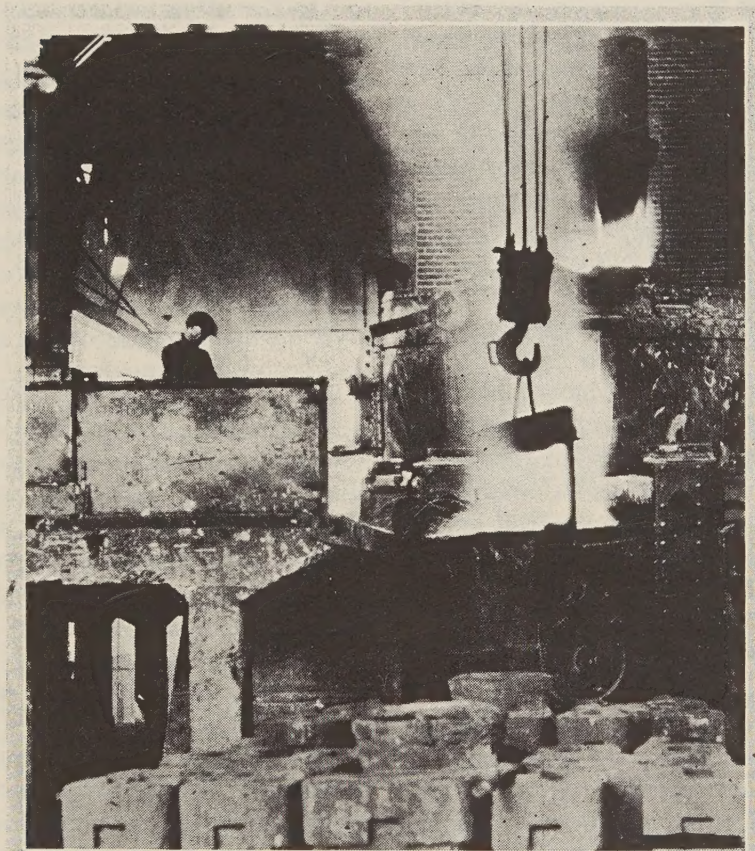
Alone, it certainly will not solve the industrial problem. With amalgamation in existence, in a more or less perfect way, there will still be injunctions and militia and the soldiery in general to contend with. But closer union organization will improve a thousand fold the work of directing the men in a unit on the political field. That will capture the instruments of Government, which make injunctions and militia and other soldiery the tools of the employing groups and the financiers back of them.

Among the Workers in Metal

Six Divided Unions Face the Close-Knit N. M. T. A.

By EUGENE J. BROCK

DOCTORING
A SICK
LOCOMOTIVE
—Where a
“Union of Unions”
Has Partly Come
Into Being.



Keystone Photos

“If the
Rail Shop
Crafts Can
Work Together
Why Can’t
the Metal
Workers?”

YOU and I become strange creatures when we fool with Dogmas. They act much the same with us as does hard liquor. They go to our heads, and make us see a blurred vision of things.

Of late the question of union amalgamation has suffered from that dread disease. It has been mixed up with discussions of the Third International. Those for and against it have spent as much time debating the virtues of Soviet Russia, and the possibilities of following in her footsteps, as they have in considering the problem that has come face to face with the American labor unions.

Amalgamation, after all, is a simple question of reorganizing the Labor Movement’s business, in its relations with its own membership and its employers. The Labor Movement itself is an enterprise whose job it is to secure the highest wellbeing for its members.

Let us take the great metal industry—one of the most important in the United States. “Can this objective of the Labor Movement be gained there by a half-dozen and more independently acting craft unions? Or, is united action more practical and promising?”

Those are the questions—and those only—that must be answered by the workers in metal. Amsterdam or Red Trade Union Internationals, personalities, or Soviet Russia have no legitimate place in the discussion.

The Enemy Unites

The history of the Metal Industry itself has been one of steady progress toward consolidation during the past few decades. Along with this consolidation came improved and cheaper methods of production, greater stability, the elimination of waste, greater profits and more efficient sales methods. Along with it have also gone a rapid

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improvement in machinery, which has steadily shifted skill from the mechanic to the machine. Thus has the bargaining power of the workers been weakened and the available labor supply in the industry been increased.

So far as the employers are concerned, what has been the effect of this stronger-knit unity? The answer is simple. Not only has it increased their power of resistance against the unions, but it has added to their aggressiveness. From a defensive position, they have shifted to an offensive one. They have prevented further union organization by introducing an elaborate spy system, in the hands of private detective agencies. This system today spreads over the industry like a spider web.

Even the smaller independent establishments have fallen into line. They have followed the example of their larger rivals and have joined the National Metal Trades Association. Anyone familiar with the trade union struggle knows what "National Metal Trades Association" means. It is the most efficient of all the industrial unions of the employers. Its object is to halt organization of the workers, and to harass and weaken those who have organized in spite of its efforts.

"Fair Weather Boats"

The unions, menaced with instant death, were compelled to create a basis for united action against this association. Out of their danger grew the Metal Trades Department of the A. F. of L. All of the unions in the metal industry came into it, and local units—known as Metal Trades Councils—were established in industrial centers throughout the country.

Unfortunately, the Metal Trades Councils and the Metal Trades Department have never been anything but "fair weather boats." They sank when the first squall struck them. The several internationals holding membership in the Metal Trades Department hesitated to delegate any power to the Department. The record of the councils, as a result, became anything but encouraging. They are, as it is, practically useless at the time they are needed most. Organizations must first seek permission and advice from their respective internationals before assisting some sister union in a fight with an employer. Even if favorable action is taken, this method is too clumsy a weapon against the efficient up-to-date methods of the National Metal Trades Association.

Nearly ten years ago the officers of the International Association of Machinists advised their

membership to endorse the policy of amalgamation. They felt that this division in the metal industry—leading to a weakening of the unions—was a great folly. The membership agreed with them. The idea of closer organization was overwhelmingly endorsed, and invitations were sent out to the other unions to take similar action and to attend a conference on the matter.

Ten Years Go By

Nearly ten years have gone by and the status quo remains. In convention after convention of the Metal Trades Department, the delegates of the Machinists have introduced the proposal for consolidation, only to be turned down. During those ten years the power of the employers has increased immensely. They have strengthened their own industrial union and made it a bigger and better fighting force.

They have divided the country into 17 districts, over which they rule with an iron hand. No employer can remain a member of the association who makes an agreement of any kind with an international union. There are also 23 branches, with officers, executive staffs, and machinery or organization—on the job every day against Unionization. The districts and branches are under control of the national body. They are not a loose federation, but one solid whole—taking orders from the central body.

Against this powerful unit, we have a half-dozen craft organizations in metal, with as many headquarters in as many cities. They have no common plan of action in organization work, and hardly any in wage negotiations—except in a few isolated instances. "Is it any wonder," champions of amalgamation say, "that we cut such a sorry figure in this important basic industry?"

Working Together; Fighting Together

The Machinists, Molders, Patternmakers, Polishers, Boilermakers and Blacksmiths are closely related trades, often overlapping. Each of them forms a link in the organized chain of production. In the workshops their efforts go hand in hand. Their united action as unionists seems to follow, without argument or doubt.

Add to these organizations the Sheet Metal and Electrical workers outside of the building trade, and the Jewelry workers—and one can see the possibilities of amalgamation—or even closer union through an efficient Metal Trades Department, with some power to mobilize the scattered forces of these eight or nine organizations.

Such a consolidation, so champions of this policy argue, would create a powerful metal workers'

organization of at least half a million members. It would create confidence and stability. It would cause hundreds and thousands of former members to renew interest in their unions. It would create a new spirit, making possible the development of workers' education, cooperatives, a strong labor press, and other labor activities on a large scale.

It would simplify organization work, placing at the disposal of the organizing department the resources of all organizations. Thus would waste be done away with, and costs cut down.

It could mobilize its forces quickly. Most important of all, it would be more nearly a match for the employers' organization in the industry. This alone, from a strictly financial viewpoint, would be most valuable to unions as well as members. For it would reduce the number of disastrous strikes waged by the individual crafts.

Why Unity Is Delayed

It has not been by mere chance that this program has been delayed. The obstacles in the way of closer union are deep rooted. Many of them are the more difficult because they are not problems of sentiment, but of organization detail. Chief among them are:

1. Ignorance born of a lack of information of the members, chief cause of indifference.
2. Craft Traditions.
3. Inequality of resources of the crafts in the industry. Conflicting, cumbersome laws, difference in benefit and insurance advantages.
4. Fear of officers for loss of position and prestige.

You can see how rocky is the road leading toward metal workers' unity. These obstacles must not be discounted. They will have to be reckoned with and met, each one, before a more efficient fighting machine is erected.

But there are, also, encouraging signs on the roadway. They point to a gradual overcoming of these obstacles. Here are five hopeful developments that mean final progress:

1. The pressure of events is forcing the issue upon membership and officers alike.
2. Craft tradition is disappearing rapidly with the steady "automatization" of the industry, thus reducing the personal skill of the mechanic to the smallest degree.
3. Inequalities in resources will diminish as resources of all organizations are tending to diminish under pressure of the employers' aggressive campaign. Officers and members will speedily realize that the advantages of general consolidation will far outweigh any sacrifices that may be made by any of the unions in matter of finances and benefits that individual crafts may possess.
4. Many officers are beginning to realize that consolidation does not endanger their position. With consol-



Keystone Photos

A MECHANICAL ADVANCE

Electric magnet used to lift "scrap." Advances in Union methods also become necessary with new conditions.

idation of unions will come greater responsibility with increased problems. The driving and attractive power of a larger organization will induce an increase in membership and a widening of the sphere of influence. This, in turn, will call for more rather than fewer officers. The loss of prestige that many officers fear is not as difficult as it may seem. An arrangement can be made that all present heads of the Internationals form an executive council for the united organization. The office of General President can be rotated at stated periods, similar to many courts who elect a presiding judge for different terms, thus placing all of them on an equal rank.

5. The most hopeful sign for immediate unity is the sentiment for strengthening the Metal Trades Department. This can be done by clothing it with power enough to bring about action similar to the Shop Crafts in the Railway Employees Department. Such action would be an approach towards ultimate amalgamation and a vast improvement over present methods, and could well receive the encouragement of every forward-looking member and officer.

Amalgamation or consolidation is possible if the discussion is lifted from its present plane of invective and abuse. If we cannot bring into play the same cool judgment that the employers use so effectively in carrying on their own business affairs, then we deserve to pay the penalty for our folly and lack of vision.

In the Needle Trades

Moves Toward Closer Union, Step by Step

By J. M. BUDISH

THE case for a closer combination among the needle trades workers was first officially stated by the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers at their convention in May, 1919. Their resolution sums up this case in the following terms:

"All the needle trades have many problems in common. They all suffer to a great extent from the periodical dull seasons, from the system of contracting and sub-contracting, and they are all more or less subject to the whims of fashion. They are also all immediately affected by every change in the purchasing power of the big masses of the people.

"The processes of production in the different needle trades are to a large degree similar, so that workers can easily pass from one trade to another. The seasonal character of the industry and the overlapping of the busy seasons of the different trades create a class of migratory workers who pass from one trade to another, being attached to none and creating in each difficulties for the respective organization.

"The similarity of conditions, of the processes of production, of machinery and materials, brought about a close cooperation among the employers of the various needle industries. . . . It is now an established fact that in our struggle for the betterment of our conditions we are facing not merely the employers of our own trade but must also reckon with the combined assistance they receive from the employers of all other needle industries."

Because of these conditions, the resolution calls for an effective combination among the various needle trades organizations "for the defense of their common rights, for the promotion of their common interests, for the solution of their common problems and for their mutual support against the combined employing interests."

The convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, held a year later, in May, 1920, went a step farther. It declared that "the interests of all the workers in the needle trades industries in the United States and Canada are similar and identical, and it will be possible to carry on much more efficient organi-

zation work if it will be united into one central body."

In 1920

This action arose out of the grave conditions which the needle trades were then facing. The war had come and gone. "Prosperity" had come and gone with it. Each one of the unions was confronted with the enormous task of checking the attacks of the employers. They had to meet the repeated attempts to cut wages. They had to take up the problem of organizing the new and growing non-union centers. In 1920 it was already evident that this gigantic job would demand the united strength of all the organized workers in the needle trades. A spirit of cooperation has always prevailed among their unions. But it was now felt that this cooperation must be made fully effective. The way to do that was to set up efficient machinery. It was generally agreed that this could be brought about only by uniting all of the existing unions into one central body—"for offensive and defensive purposes."

The Ladies' Garment Workers took quick action on the decision of their convention. They called a conference of all the needle trade organizations, "without regard to their affiliation." The meeting took place at the Hotel McAlpin, New York City, on December 9-11, 1920. The United Garment Workers of America declined to take part. They stated that they could not meet with unions not affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. All the other organizations of the needle trades—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the International Fur Workers' Union, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the Journeymen Tailors' Union and the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers—were represented.

A serious cleavage appeared at the conference on the question of Federation vs. Amalgamation. The International Ladies' Garment Workers, supported by the Furriers, favored a federation of all the international unions present. The various internationals, under this plan, would preserve their full autonomy as before and should not be interfered with in their internal affairs in any way. The Amalgamated Clothing

Workers, supported by the Journeymen Tailors' Union, came out squarely for the amalgamation of all these organizations into a single international union. This union would work on the department plan, the "departments" to take in such branches of the trade as could be classified in one department. Each department would have a certain degree of self-government. The United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers made an effort to reconcile these two points of view. It tried to find a basis on which the conference could get together on a program of action.

Hillman and Sigman

It is worth while to dwell a moment on the reasons behind this division of opinion. President Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated, in insisting upon amalgamation, protested: "We are confronting a general attack upon the workers of the clothing trades. . . . I am for exercising or putting the organization in a condition where it may yield its utmost power. I do not believe we are justified in losing one ounce of power if we can help it. . . . I would not like to see that if something happens in the needle trades which might materially weaken the labor movement that any of us should feel we have not used all the power at our disposal. What is our actual power? Moral and financial—the first even more than the second. . . . As I said, I am more worried about the morale. We will try to get the most money but of that we cannot get more than we really can. The big thing today is to get the morale. . . . In my judgment, if it should be brought to them (the membership) that all these trades have actually combined into one organization, our people would get the conviction that we cannot be beaten."

Vice-president (now President) Sigman of the International Ladies' Garment Workers spoke in favor of federation. He laid stress upon the conviction that if it would be possible to accept amalgamation "the moral effect as well as the financial effect would be the identical one as if you organized the alliance on the form and basis" of a federation.

"You cannot expect, even if you would adopt the plan of amalgamation, to really effect or enforce or create the effective organization that would be possible if it had been in existence for the last two, three or four years. The only thing we really can do at this present time is probably to get busy with the reformation and reconstruction. . . . As far as moral prestige is concerned,

I absolutely do not see any advancement in the amalgamation plan. The inspiration, in my judgment, will be stronger if we form an alliance as we have suggested." He further stated that the last convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers expressed itself in favor of federation. The organization was in any case bound by this action of the convention. "It is my impression," he said, "that all of us here have the hope of having that form of organization as presented by Brothers Hillman and Sweeney effected in the American Labor Movement." He put the accent on the American Labor Movement, emphasizing that his union "does not feel ready to withdraw and does not feel ready to create a condition that may make them to withdraw" from the American Federation of Labor. The implication was that amalgamation with non-American Federation of Labor unions might create a rather delicate situation for the organizations in the American Federation of Labor.

"Cannot Build Over-Night"

President Zaritsky of the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers assumed "that all of us are in perfect accord with the principle of amalgamation. . . . In fact, as I told the committee yesterday, I am for both reports. The question is only of practicability, of what can or cannot be done now. No organization is being formed over-night. Organizations have to be built.

"If the alliance is not to be an alliance merely on paper, it makes no material difference whether it is the alliance in conjunction with the component organizations that assists its members or whether it is the General Executive Board of the amalgamated body that does so. On the other hand, if it is a question of considering the interests of certain organizations in this group we must give them that consideration."

The conference finally adopted the federation plan. For, as President Schlesinger of the I. L. G. W. U., put it, majority and minority votes cannot apply to such conferences. Decisions must be made by the consent of all unions participating. It was clear that unless the conference was ready to adjourn without taking any action (a result which all present were anxious to avoid) the minimum program had to be adopted. The conference agreed that the federation should be called the Needle Trades Workers' Alliance of America. It was to be governed by an Executive Council, consisting of three representatives from every affiliated organization.

LABOR AGE

From every affiliated organization a per capita tax of one-half cent per month per member was to be paid, to keep the Alliance afloat.

With these mere "first steps" agreed upon, the conference adjourned. The frame-work of the constitution was left, to be worked out by a special committee. This adjournment without having adopted a definite constitution was unfortunate. It left the Alliance more or less "up in the clouds." Even more so was the failure of the conference to appoint an executive officer, able to devote all his time to the newly launched venture. The officers chosen held high positions in their own unions. They had their hands full with the affairs of these unions. Almost immediately after the conference, all the needle trades became engaged in serious troubles. This tied the hands of the officials of the Alliance still more. They had neither the time nor the opportunity to push its affairs. The subject was permitted to drift into oblivion. No doubt this gave a serious set-back to the whole movement.

Reviving the Idea

But the idea was far from dead. Two years later an effort was made to revive it. The United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers took the first step this time. They sent a communication to the conventions of all the other needle trade unions, urging action. They pointed to the failure of the first conference as being due largely to the difficulties through which all the unions had been passing during the years 1920 to 1922. They asked for another conference, now "that the crisis is about passed."

The conventions of the Ladies' Garment Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers "stuck to their guns" on their opinions of what should be done. The former declared for federation. The latter demanded amalgamation. But both gave power to their general boards to take part in the conference which the Cap Makers were urging.

This encouraged this latter body to continue the effort for united action. In December, 1922, it sent another suggestion to the boards of the unions taking part in the first conference. In order to avoid the mistakes of the previous meeting, it asked that the various unions come prepared to discuss the entire frame-work of the Alliance and the machinery for putting it into effect. For that purpose, the Cloth Hat and Cap Makers themselves submitted a draft of a constitution, based on the following principle:

"While refraining from interfering in the

structure of the existing organization or in the practices that may have become rooted in the life of their respective trades, and which they may feel essential for the success of their work, it aims to give the Alliance enough cohesion and strength to enable it to promote the organization of all the needle workers and to become a really helpful and effective factor for the branches of the needle trades industry in which the separate international unions now function."

A Needle Trades' Constitution

The constitution provided for the holding of annual conventions. The representation was to be based on the membership of each organization. An Executive Council was suggested, to consist of some members elected by the convention and some to be appointed directly by every affiliated organization. It also provided for the establishment of Local Branches in all cities where there are two or more local unions belonging to two or more international unions affiliated to the Alliance. It finally provided for the appointment of a paid executive secretary, to devote all his time to the business of the Alliance.

This suggestion, so far as a new conference went, was acted upon favorably by all the organizations. With these replies at hand, the Cloth Hat and Cap Makers sent invitations to all the unions, asking them to meet on March 30 of this year. Again union affairs stepped in to prevent action. Some of the organizations became wrapped up in negotiations with their employers. This caused postponement. Then, the convention of the Cloth Hat and Cap Makers themselves led to a further wait. Now it appears that the meeting will finally be held sometime in September.

There can hardly be a better time for a serious effort to carry out this experiment than the present. There is a lull in practically all the trades. While conditions are not at their best, a period of comparative quiet is more or less assured. This period of peace may not last very long. It certainly should be taken advantage of for the great task of building up an effective combination of all the needle trades workers. It is a task which cannot be accomplished by the mere working out of a fine scheme of organization. Such a combination can be made worth while only by actually being put into practice.

Action for unity, in a clear-cut way, is now in order.

New Dangers for the Needle Trades

By OSSIP WOLINSKY

THE Needle Trade Unions are perhaps the strongest and most advanced in the United States of America. The sweat-shop period of years ago has been wiped out from the memories of the toiling masses.

We have lived to see the dream of an 8-hour workday and a 44-hour working week realized in the Men's Clothing shops, in the Women's Apparel factories, in the Fur Industry, in the Hat and Cap Trade, in the Fancy Leather Goods shops, and in other places.

Not only did the Needle Trade Unions stand their own ground in battle with the common enemy against oppression, but they have helped other unions in their fights. It was the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America who helped the steel workers with no less a sum than \$100,000 during the gigantic attempt to organize a union in the steel mills and iron and tin foundries. It was the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and other Needle Trade Unions which helped the general strike of the 500,000 miners. That battle marked the turning point against the open shoppers and instilled American workers with a new spirit of revolt against lowering living standards.

The Needle Trade Unions are children of the storm. They were born during bloody industrial warfare which had hardly a day's respite during their twelve or thirteen odd years of continued existence. It must always be remembered that the Needle Trades are highly seasonal in character. The between season slack periods expose the Unions to onslaughts on the part of the common enemy, using the weapons of hunger, starvation and unemployment to force rebellious workmen into submission. Only a high sense of duty, a great enthusiasm, the highest kind of idealism and the strongest longing for freedom and righteousness made it possible for the Needle Trade Unions to survive and take their places amongst the most advanced militant forward-looking Labor Unions in the land.

Diseases of Their Own

The Needle Trades are infested, however, with diseases only typical and peculiar to petty home industries.

The passing of the small shop, the development of the big factory and the concentration of capital, as preached in the Socialist Doctrines of Carl Marx, can hardly be applied to the Needle Industries.

The small shop is flourishing today as never before. The big inside factories are gradually disappearing and the place of the big factory captains of industry is taken by the so-called jobber, an invisible creature which has the contracting, sub-manufacturing, "cooperation shops" and home workers under his iron heel. He dictates terms and conditions for the industry. But he is not responsible for the working standards in the contracting and sub-manufacturing shops, and is beyond Union control.

The Needle Trade Unions have established contractual relations with the jobbers within the Needle Industries to the effect that they must buy and do business with Union shops, but the jobbers have always managed to evade all obligations. The social shop problem, cooperation shop, contracting shop, sub-manufacturing shop, as

well as the jobber problem, are taxing the energies and brains of Needle Trade Unions, which are seeking not only relief but a permanent solution.

The hitherto tried out prescriptions of union doctors and professors—such as the registration of contracting and sub-manufacturing shops, the Union control books, Union Agreements with Jobbers to the effect that they must do business with Union shops only—have proven thus far insufficient. It is, therefore, not surprising that the General Executive Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union at its last session, appointed a Special Committee under the leadership of President Morris Sigman to study this problem. They are to report back at the next meeting of the General Board the result of their findings.

The other Needle Trade Unions will follow with great interest the measures proposed by the Special Committee of the I. L. G. W. U. to cope with the above mentioned evils of the Ladies' Garment Industry. For, these evils are threatening the life of other needle trade unions in a greater or lesser measure.

The Out-of-Town Shop

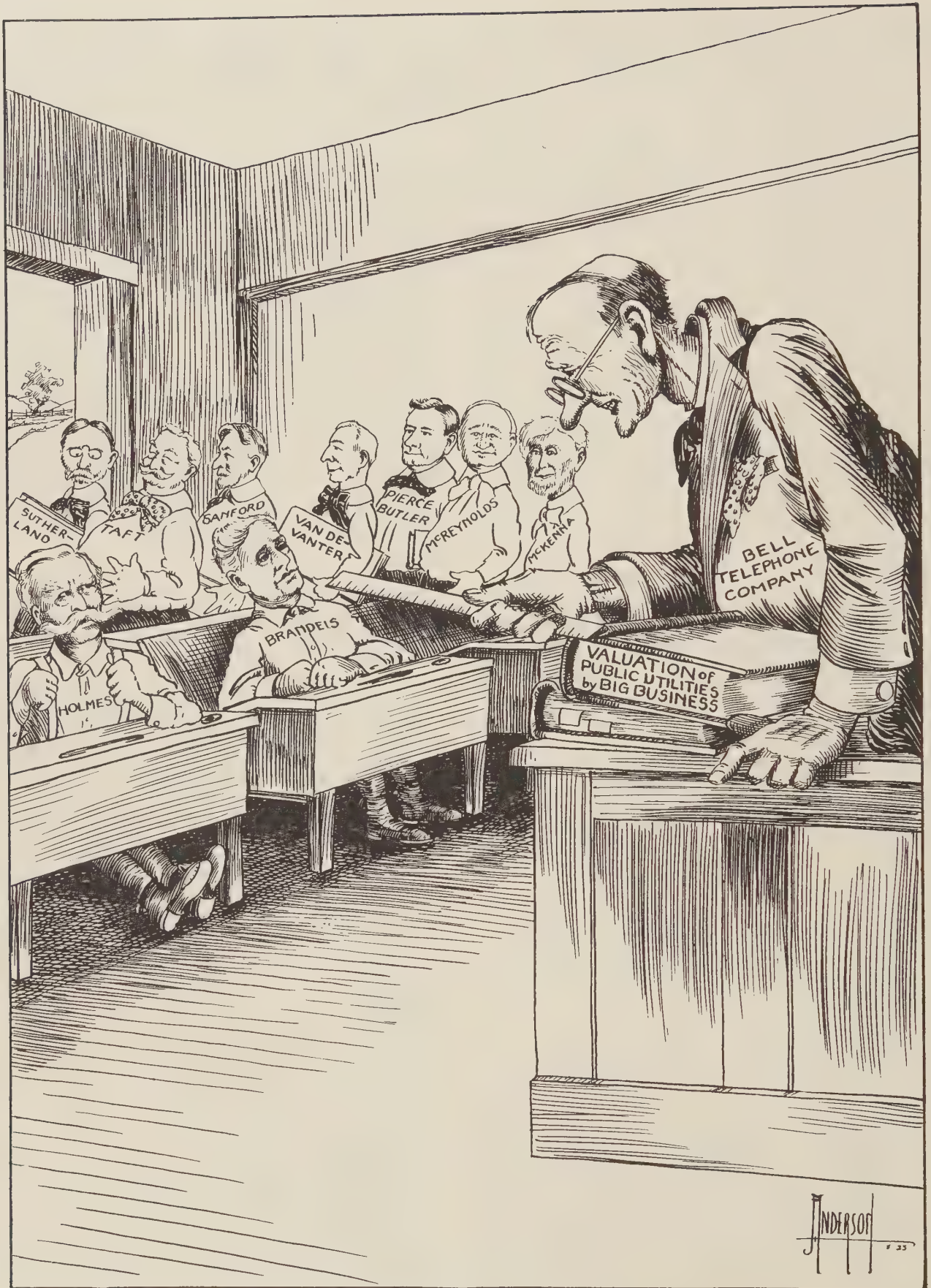
Then, in addition to the grave problems of jobbing, contracting, sub-manufacturing, etc., the Needle Trade Unions are facing another great problem. It is the out-of-town shop.

A camel may not pass through the eye of a needle so easily. And it may be very difficult, expensive, and almost impossible to move high-powered machinery from one place to another, from one city to another. But it is very easy to move the light machinery, tables, and all other lightweight needle trade implements for the manufacturing of garments. The past five or six years have been marked by a great exodus of garment shops from the cities to the small suburban towns, outlying city vicinities, small country towns and villages where there is a large cheap farmer and domestic labor element available.

Waist and dress shops, cloak and suit shops, vest and pants shops, jacket and coat shops, petticoat and white goods shops, leather goods and trunk shops are to be found scattered all through the states of New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois and New York.

The out-of-town problem is a growing menace. The city workers have learned from bitter experience of the great obstacles in the way of unionizing the local workers in far suburban towns. These workers look upon the new-coming employers as saviors. For the small town the employers carry their trail "prosperity, regular source of income, wages and more work opportunities."

Individual effort brought the Needle Trade Unions very meager results. Concerted, well-planned, joint action may crown the efforts of the Needle Trade Unions with success. All plans for a Federation or Amalgamation of the Needle Trade Unions may wait. But the out-of-town problem is demanding immediate attention of all the Needle Trade Unions.



Drawn for LABOR AGE by J. F. Anderson of the Machinists

THE NAUGHTY BOYS

The Teacher (to the "dissenters"): "You will have to remain for a private lesson."
(The Supreme Court O. K.'s Bell Telephone Co. idea of Valuation—"Holmes and Brandeis Dissenting.")

Curing Uncle Sam of "Elephantiasis"

A Farmer-Labor Victory and a "Farmer-Labor" Convention

By THE LABOR PRESS

OUR COVER AND COOLIDGE

ALTHOUGH we mourn deeply and sincerely the coming of Calvin Coolidge into the presidency, our cover is not in black on that account. The artist, Chumley, did such a fine piece of work in black and white that we could not resist reproducing the cover in that style.

But it is set down here as a matter of prophecy, that the reign of Calvin will be a time of rigid fasting and prayer. Like his 16th century namesake, he will use the stake freely on those who chance to differ with his infallible opinions. His vision will be safely goggled by his interest, his prejudices and the myth that he—the strong and violent—broke the Boston police strike. A small, weak man in the role of Jove is a fearful and dangerous thing.

DO you recall the last presidential election? It seems far, far away—back in the misty age when brainless reptiles were the highest form of life on the globe. As far as political thought is concerned, it might well have happened in that age.

By a 7,000,000 surplus the elephant of the G. O. P. swept into power. Henry Daugherty and his railroad injunction succeeded A. Mitchell Palmer and his anti-miners injunction. A high tariff hit both farmers and workers between the eyes and below the belt. The workers of the cities and the farmers of the country were jumped on by Reaction with both feet.

"Things are different now, as you can see"—to quote a line from Nora Bayes' well-known song. Uncle Sam is gradually being cured of "Elephantiasis." Minnesota in 1920 gave the elephant 360,000 of those 7,000,000 surplus votes. On July 16th it added another Farmer-Labor Senator to the ranks of the United States Senate by a plurality of 90,000. There is but one meaning to this result. It is, as **Labor**, organ of the rail unions, says: "A stinging repudiation of the Harding Administration and gives Progressives control of the Senate." And it adds: "Two years of Harding and Daugherty produced the change. On the eve of the election the President's Washington organ declared on its first page, 'The voters of Minnesota must choose between the policies of Harding and the policies of LaFollette.'"

The Gopher voters chose—and their choice was "Fighting Bob." And thereby they demonstrated, as the **Oklahoma Leader** sees it, "that the two old parties are deadlier than coffin nails and should be buried or combined." The next United States Senator from Oklahoma," it predicts, "will be a radical of the LaFollette, Frazier, Shipstead, and Brookhart type."

The **Milwaukee Leader** rejoices in the victory of "the Big Swede," though it thinks that "it was Johnson's picturesqueness, rather than the contents of his noodle, that got him the Farmer-Labor nomination." Then, it explains, "the progressives and radicals flocked to him almost en masse because he was by far the best of the candidates." The Leader thinks it significant that "for the first time since the Civil War an American state finds itself with two third-party representatives in the United States Senate."

It points to the fact that "the state action was preceded by a united labor combination in the city of Minneapolis which came close to electing Van Lear for a second term two years ago and which carried a majority of the aldermen at the recent election." The nation as a whole could be covered by a Farmer-Labor ticket in the next election, it thinks, "if it were not for a gentleman by the name of McAdoo." The Conference for Progressive Political Action "sees a chance to control the presidency by the election of McAdoo."

The **New York Call** agrees that "Johnson himself is not important. He may rise to the expectations of his supporters or he may disappoint them. The significance of the election lies in the fact that the Farmer-Labor forces have beaten the two parties of capitalism." In the Call's eyes the big possibility out of the election is "the beginning of an independent party of the workers modeled after the British Labor party in organization and program."

But the **Minnesota Daily Star**, the chief newspaper support of the Farmer-Labor forces, is not so sure that this is "the meaning of the victory." "There are two progressive tendencies," it says, "one making toward an independent third party and the other for the present toward the capture and utilization of old party machinery." In its

opinion, "the Minnesota victory assists in both directions. It demonstrated what an independent progressive third party can do, and at the same

common sense on their part by deserting the two old gangs, misnamed political parties, that so long betrayed them."

The telegram of President Samuel Gompers of the A. F. of L. congratulating the new Senator on his victory made the rejoicings of Labor unanimous at the Minnesota result. As the **Reading Labor Advocate** sums up the situation:

"Every radical, Socialists included, can afford to rejoice at Johnson's election. Not that the existence of the wage and profit system has been definitely challenged; the Farmer-Labor forces do not go so far as that. But the mere fact that thousands of workers have awakened to the fact that their welfare can not be served by the political parties of Wall Street and have had sufficient initiative and moral courage to renounce party preference in order to gain political power for themselves is sufficient to give solid satisfaction."

While these sounds of joy are heard from the farmer-worker camp, the **Illinois Miner** introduces a doleful note, in reporting the treachery of Governor Walton of Oklahoma to the Farmer-Labor forces. "At the command of the representatives of the oil interests, the asphalt trust and the bankers, Walton has fired George Wilson out of his presidency of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and declared open war on the producers who backed him." Wilson is former Non-Partisan League organizer, "a dirt farmer and experienced teacher." Walton, running as a Democrat, was elected to the governorship by a Farmer-Labor combine, on what was known as the "Shawnee platform." He appointed Wilson to the presidency of the agricultural college over the protest of the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan. But later he changed his mind, under the pressure of a coterie of corporation lawyers, the **Oklahoma Leader** charges. In the incident the **New York Call** sees strong proof of the futility of "nonpartisan political action" and of the necessity for a Labor party. At the same time the Minnesota Federation of Labor, flushed with the results obtained there, goes on record by an overwhelming majority, for independent political action, putting the matter up to the American Federation of Labor's next convention.

The progress of the "united national progressive party" which the state Federation wants, is complicated by the appearance in the field of the Federated Farmer-Labor party. Two weeks before the Johnson election a conference was held in Chicago, called by the Farmer-Labor party. Out of that conference emerged the "federated" party, controlled to a large extent by the communists of the Workers' party. These "communist tacti-



Oklahoma Leader

DIVERTING HIS ATTENTION
But it didn't work in Minnesota

time it dealt the political machine monopoly in America one of the most staggering blows of its history. The Minnesota victory was perhaps as much of a demonstration of revolt against the political machine as it was a demonstration of the possibilities of the Farmer-Labor Movement."

The **Locomotive Engineers' Journal** tersely states that "Labor's greatest advance in July was the election of Senator Magnus Johnson. Because," it says, "he is a dirt farmer. Because his election was the result of the close cooperation of workers and farmers. Because he was elected on a platform which recognizes the mutual interests of city and country workers. Because his election insures the control of the Senate by the common people for the next two years." This thought is echoed by **St. Louis Labor**, which regards the election of Johnson as "nothing short of the beginning of a political revolution, the effects of which will have the most far-reaching influence on next year's presidential and congressional campaigns." But the **Buffalo New Age** assures us that "it is not a case of farmers seeing 'red' or their turning 'revolutionary.'" It is only "an instance of sturdy

cians," the **Minnesota Union Advocate** states, "readily recognize the futility of trying to promote their doctrines at the present time and in the manner heretofore employed." They, therefore, "captured" the convention and with it the name "Farmer-Labor."

John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor and one of the founders of the original Farmer-Labor party, issued a statement after the convention attacking the methods of the Workers' party. Declaring himself "a good friend of Foster," having "signed bonds for him" in the Michigan case and fought beside him in the Steel Strike of 1919, he denounces Foster and Ruthenberg for their action in the convention. According to Fitzpatrick, the story is as follows:

"They (the communists) captured the name of the Farmer-Labor party as a means of covering up their movement for direct action. What they did was the same as one who, when invited to a house as a guest, seizes the host by the throat and throws him out of his own house. We had aright to expect good manners from our guests. They did not show any, however. The Workers' party has by shameful means captured that which it went after—the name of the Farmer-Labor party. It will, however, fool nobody."

Foster, on the other hand, in his **Labor Herald**, charges that "the Farmer-Labor party leaders, with few exceptions, never entered into the spirit of the convention. They did practically nothing to build it up. Many even sabotaged it outright." With this view the rest of the communist press unanimously agree. The **Worker** calls the new creation "the first mass party of American workers and farmers," and the **Voice of Labor** declares that "from the farms and factories, forests and railroads," the workers hail the new alliance. They urge the Workers' party members to spread the message of the new party through the Labor Movement.

But equally unanimous is the criticism by the non-communist labor press of all shades of opinion of what happened at Chicago. The **Minnesota Union Advocate** calls it a "miscarriage." The **Railway Carmen's Journal** says, "the Workers party captured itself and adopted a new name," calling attention to the fact that the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, John Brophy of the Miners and other large progressive labor groups would have nothing to do with the convention after the Workers' party group had gotten into action. The **New Age** denounces it as "Foster's folly" and describes the Workers' party as "a party minus



Milwaukee Leader

"THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION"
One Reason for the Farmers' Revolt

workingmen, full of Punch-and-Judy Robespierres and Lenines—all generals and no soldiers." The **Locomotive Engineers' Journal** says that, as a result of the convention, "Organized Labor in America is removed at least one step further from independent political action." The **Milwaukee Leader** finds that the "Farmer-Laborites have now had their dose of the same theory—that the end justifies the means"—that the Socialists suffered from as a result of dealing with the Communists. Editorial after editorial reflects the same view. And the **American Labor Monthly**, which has been friendly to the Communist cause, joins in saying that it was not "wise" on the part of the Workers' party, for its own welfare, to "obtain an easy victory over the old Farmer-Labor party. Federated unity, that is unity by agreement, which is the task of the movement, cannot be achieved by way of political murder of associates." "From the point of view of the movement as a whole," it adds, "the Chicago conference and its resultant organization have both been premature."

The withdrawal of all big labor and farmer groups from the "federated" party shows clearly that the labor press as a whole is merely reflecting the opinion of the American farmers and workers. They will have nothing to do with an organization linked up with the Third International.

Ups and Downs

The Adventures of an American Wholesale Cooperative

By A. M. JENNINGS

APENDULUM may swing ever so far in one direction. But it is pretty sure to swing an equal distance in the other.

Only a few years ago in this country "Cooperation" was a mere joke. Today it is one of the most interesting of the many phases of economic effort. Never until recently has there been any real cooperative growth on this side of the Atlantic.

None of the recent ventures of the workers is more interesting than that of the Illinois miners. They have not only covered the coal regions with retail cooperative stores; but have attempted the bigger job of running a "Central States Wholesale Cooperative Society."

"How is the Society getting on today?" That is the question that the editor of *LABOR AGE* has asked me to answer. I suppose (because I am at present a Director) I am supposed to know.

The Millennium Arrives

The "Central States" had its beginning in a very modest way. It was born about the time the war closed. Its fathers were Rochdale miners of Southern Illinois. The first few weeks of their venture was so successful that it attracted wide attention among their neighbors. Everybody wanted to get in on such a good thing. They were let in. The business grew in a few short months from a few hundred dollars to over two million a year. Everything looked rosy. The Millennium had arrived. The one little store in the beginning grew into a gigantic wholesale establishment with about seventy retail store outlets almost in a night.

The local miners' unions, as well as the district itself, poured money into the new enterprise in a lavish manner. Before we knew it over half a million dollars of our savings had been invested in the Central States, the organization which was going to break our chains of bondage immediately. The old Rochdalers were swamped by enthusiasm. In vain did they raise their voice in warning. They were shoved to one side. They were "too old fashioned and plodding." What was the use of being content with ordinary dividends? Did not private business make millions? We were going to do the same. "Well, let's go!" We went! Right straight into the Bankruptcy Courts.

One morning we woke up and found that we could pay about two cents on the dollar of our debts. Since that time we have been perfectly willing to listen to the old fashioned Rochdalers who were "too plodding."

Of course, you want to know how this all came about, when there was so much money to be had and so much enthusiasm to draw from. Well, we have found that it takes something more than mere money and enthusiasm to run a cooperative society successfully. I do not think there was any dishonesty to speak of that brought about our downfall. There was, however, a lot of petty politics, an over-abundance of inefficiency, and too much half-baked enthusiasm.

The fact that a brother may have led a strike some place to a successful conclusion, is not always proof that he can conduct a cooperative store on a paying business. The fact that another brother may have been an excellent auditor in his local union, does not mean that he also understands a complicated set of business books, well enough to find losses and the reason. A brother may be a fluent talker in his local, but that does not mean that he can go out and organize new and successful cooperative societies and start them off on a sound basis. A certain brother in a local may have given long, faithful years of service to Labor and be deserving of a pension. But often it is better to pay that pension out of the treasury direct than it is to undertake to pay him by putting him in charge of a cooperative store. Brothers may have much to say in their locals about the benefits of cooperation. But before they are put on local store boards we should be sure that they trade at the store. We have gone through all these mistakes—and more—in our brief experimental life, which to date has cost us close to half a million dollars.

Killing the Goose

Right in the beginning we hit our Rochdalers a low body blow which has rebounded and put us, ourselves, almost down and out. We could not see the logic of their argument at all when they told us, "it would be fatal for us to undertake to put the dividends in the basket when the



LABOR AGE Photos

THE CENTRAL STATES WHOLESALE COOPERATIVE WAREHOUSE

customer came for his purchases." What was the use of waiting three months or longer for dividends? The time to get them was when we bought the goods. Then we would be sure of them. No crook would have any chance to run off with them.

We have found to our sad experience that it is the easiest thing in the world not only to put the dividends in the basket but also the principal. That is exactly just what we did to the tune of half a million. Now that it is too late, we have found that one can't have cake and eat it, too. It was fine while it lasted, but we have almost, if not completely killed the goose that was laying the golden eggs. Any one who is familiar with the "Central States" will tell you that we have a mighty sick goose on our hands, which will require careful nursing to bring back to life. The one thing we are fortunate in is that we do have a good nurse, those "old fashioned" Rochdalers.

When we started out to strike our chains from us, we tramped all over those Rochdalers. They told us it was folly to think of having a wholesale society own all the retail stores. We laughed at them. We did not want our movement to be too much like Europe, so we put the cart before the horse. We started what we loved to call the "AMERICAN ROCHDALE PLAN." This was merely having the wholesale society own all the retail societies, instead of having the retail societies own the wholesale as they do in Europe. For the past few months we have been wracking our brains day and night trying to find a way to switch that cart around behind the horse, where it belongs. I believe

we are going to succeed. But it will take time. I must tell you how we are proceeding to make the switch.

Working the Switch

There are at present about 100 independent societies in this state. We have called on them to come to our rescue. Some of them are already responding. More will follow. We are closing our losing stores as fast as we can get to them. We are also turning over to local societies the more prosperous ones, as fast as we can wade through the red tape that the legal laws of the state have bound around us.

Recently, a number of these independent societies came together in conference with us over the situation. The primary object of their coming together was to try to arrive at some agreement for joint buying through the central states society. But what do you suppose was the first thing they did when they got together? They decided to levy a 3/10 of one per cent "tax" on their gross sales to raise a fund to put an educational director in the field, to educate the mass on cooperation. The joint buying became the secondary issue of the conference. Both of these moves are being slowly but surely worked out and will go forward in spite of all the opposition.

The Central States Wholesale Cooperative Society may go under finally (although I do not think it will). But the old Rochdalers of Illinois will still fight on. They are far from being whipped. In fact, they have just begun to fight. Too many of us have seen the lasting benefits to be gained from cooperation to ever surrender, just because we have one or two sad failures.

Mexico—Workers' Republic

By PRINCE HOPKINS

THE first effect which Mexico had upon us, was that of its picturesqueness. We landed at the sultry port of Manzanillo, and while we waited for the inland-bound train, there was plenty of time to observe the quaint natives in their enormous hats, and nearly all of the men armed. I particularly remember what looked like three ferocious brigands, their sashes stuck full of weapons, and flashing their knives, but who, on closer approach, were seen to be peeling potatoes.

The train started late and lazily, as all things do in the semi-tropic Spanish countries; climate, race and habit are almost insuperable obstacles to efficiency. Then came a journey of two and a half days from the sweltering lowlands where bananas and mangoes grow, through stupendous scenery and semi-jungle, past a smoking volcano, up to the high plateau on which Mexico City enjoys a cool climate like perpetual early spring.

Wonderful fruits were peddled beneath our car windows by natives, the men in the white linen suits and big hats and blankets which they wear when toiling in the fields, and the women in costumes of every bright color. Although we saw everywhere the devastations of past banditry and revolutions, and in spite of wide-spread poverty, the simple people caused us to exclaim often: "How happy they seem!" Another thing which impressed us was, that they had the grace and courtesy of the east, but without a spark of oriental servility.

The atmosphere of the country is by no means absent from the capital itself. Here, indeed, there are modern buildings, and, in the streets, traffic cops who sing "alto" (halt) and "adelante" (forward), try to regulate the impetuosity of flocks of American motor cars.

But go into Chapultepec Park on a Sunday and see the "cholas" on their horses—men of the aristocracy who preserve the old Spanish costume of big sombrero, burnt-orange leather jacket, gay-colored trousers striped with silver buttons, and glittering silver spurs!

Floating Gardens.

Or come out to the "floating gardens," and dream away an afternoon among its verdant islands. As our boatman oars us slowly along the lagoons, vendors of food, in small canoes, shoot alongside to offer the Spanish dishes which they're

cooking right in their canoes. Bursts of jazz come to our ear as we round some corner where a café has been erected and merry young people are dancing, often ousting the brass band in order to make their own music. Before these noises have quite died away behind, a sweeter strain, of female voices in the choruses of old Spanish songs, is borne to us over the water; and presently there comes floating toward us, a barge in which is a family or a school of girls taking a holiday.

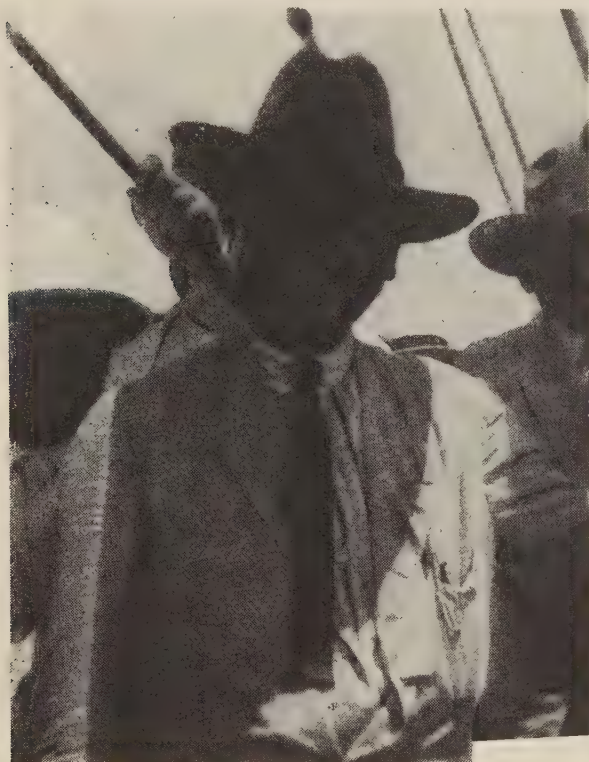
If our interest is antiquarian, we may run out to Teotihuacan, to see the huge temple of the wind-god and the pyramids of the sun and the moon, built by an ancient civilized race who inhabited the land before the Aztecs. And here we ought to learn patience with the shortcomings of this people, whose civilization when Cortez came, was like that of Egypt five thousand years ago, and whom enslavement for centuries by state and church has thrown backward more than it has advanced them. Thus this single valley of Teotihuacan, even today, supports a population of only 5,472 where; before the cruel Spanish conquistores came, there were more than ten times as many, and cities flourishing with all the arts.

But the task thus presented to the Mexican government—not to say, the lesson of the blight of alien domination—is little appreciated by a certain element among the European, and especially the American, visitors. These have come, not to coöperate with, but only to exploit and criticise, the Mexicans.

Hammer Artists.

From these colonists, you'll learn, within a few days, of all the racial faults of the natives; of the low status of women; of how few first-rate men are available to carry on certain government departments; of the laxness which still unfortunately prevails in paying some employes; of the illiteracy and need of education; of the persistence of graft in politics; of marriage and divorce laws which recognize human nature too frankly to suit Anglo-Saxon sense of propriety, and of every crime and scandal. Above all, you'll hear of cases where the reclamation of land from the big hacienda estates for division among small farmers, or cases where application of the clause 27 of the Mexican Constitution saying mineral wealth belongs to the state, has been too ruthless. But of

the gradually victorious efforts of the administration to diminish these abuses, and of the fact that the cities are clean, the schools are being opened, and the people are full of the joy of a new freedom—these things aren't discussed by the typical hammer artist.



LABOR AGE Photos

YUCATAN'S SOCIALIST GOVERNOR

I remember particularly the dope of this kind which used to be handed out to us by an American newspaper woman when we were in Cuernavaca, in the land of Morelos and Zapata. How she did extol the good old days of Diaz—and of peonage! (Incidentally, she was a daughter of Southern slave-holding parents, was a Catholic, and had lost the prospect of a fortune through the revolution.) I left her, to go to a meeting of the regional labor party. When I arrived, a school was going on in the headquarters—a class of adults from as much as five miles' distance, come to read and discuss the subjects—mostly economic and social—which interested them. A little later, the delegates to the convention came, from far and near, some on their foot and some on ponies which they tethered in the gateway of the courtyard, some city workers and more from the country, forming a picturesque group.

The Central Labor Council.

As I listened to their intelligent discussion and

their questions about America, I felt consoled for the departed glories of the regime of Diaz.

Of course, I attended other labor meetings, notably that of the Central Labor Council in Mexico City, and found the same enthusiasm for the new regime. When Obregon first assumed office, it is said that his policy was somewhat uncertainly defined. But in every progressive measure, he soon observed that, while other elements were luke-warm or hostile, labor alone was solidly behind him. So he threw in his lot whole-heartedly with the workers just as our own U. S. government throws itself whole-heartedly with the employer.

The only check, indeed, on his policy, is the ever-looming shadow of northern intervention. Ever since the United States robbed Mexico of that fair country which is now our western states, and more especially since the invasion of Mexican soil by Pershing, and the American outrages in Nicaragua, Santo Domingo and Haiti, Spanish America has lived under a cloud of natural and justified terror of the great northern neighbor, champion of Property above Humanity.

Obregon.

Yet President Obregon, in a short talk which we had with him, stressed above all things this point: "Neither the opposition from within nor from outside our country can make us deviate one inch from our objective!" Looking at the resolute, ruddy and intelligent face of this one-armed hero who had brought his country out of chaos, we felt a great confidence that his future would not belie his past. He is one man in Mexico whom even his enemies admire. But I expect to tell you more about him in a later article.

Another man we greatly enjoyed meeting was Vasconcelos, Minister of Education. His department is cooperating most heartily with the unions who write, "We have organized a school for our members and their children, but we need books, supplies and a teacher to work under our direction!" At once the department hastens to their aid. Oh, what a difference from what I was to see, a fortnight later, in Habana, Cuba. There I found indeed a workers' school supported by the Central Labor Union, but with no official help. Cuba, constantly interfered with by the U. S., shows, in exaggerated forms, the tropical laxness which our citizens complain of in Mexico, without pretense of being a labor government.

A Letter.

To show the spirit of the department, let me quote from a typical letter which Roberto Haber-

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man, Vasconcelos' assistant, sent to an American applicant for position as teacher:

"Mexico, D. F., May 7th, 1923.

"Dear Madam:

"It is the rule of this department . . . to judge the teachers on their own merits. In this particular case this is an advantage to you, considering that one of your references, the one that would probably be considered the best in most places, has been one of the most notorious fomenters of hatred during the last war, and is a most conspicuously unfit wearer of the academic robe which should stand for tolerance, breadth of vision and a keen realization of human brotherhood.

"You are sufficiently proficient in English to qualify for the position you apply for, and considering that a few millions of your countrymen have also been misled during the last war, we shall not count against you your reference to having done war work.

"What we expect of the teachers in Mexico, besides efficiency in their particular line of work, is that they be fit, not for the destructive tasks of war, but to take part in a program of reconstruction. This country has gone through a revolution of about ten years' duration that had very strong social aspects, and the teachers, as agents of the present State that has been brought about by this revolution, must take a hand to inculcate and materialize the ideas and ideals that brought this particular State into being.

"If you still wish to teach in Mexico please have your application in this office by December first."

The building which houses the Department of Education, contains also an exhibit of the art-work being fostered in the schools. This actually amazes one by the freedom from convention and



LABOR AGE Photos

"CHOLAS"

Riding in the Chapultepec Park, City of Mexico

resultant range, and the real capacity shown by the childish exhibitors. Some of these have elaborated upon old Maya or Toltec themes, but have added of their own originality.

The same touch of daring is seen in the heroic frescoes which embellish the arcades of this building and of the university. The work was

turned over by the authorities to the syndicate of painters and decorators, who then gave each panel to some capable member, with liberty to work it up as he saw fit.

The futurist touch is similarly carried to the wall decorations, and even the colored windows, of what was once a church, but is now the crowning glory of this working-class regime. There



LABOR AGE Photos

RED BANNERS OF WORKERS

Receiving Governor Felipe Carrillo on his arrival at Merida, Yucatan

this building stands boldly on a prominent corner, its doors wide open to all who wish to come, and over them the name in big lettering: "Hall of Free Discussion!"

Socialist Yucatan.

The most consistent carrying out of Socialist policy has been in Yucatan. We were fortunate in visiting its capital city, Merida, as members of the party of Governor Felipe Carrillo, whose return the citizens were celebrating with fireworks. The people seemed prosperous, clean and contented. But on the way back, what accusations and slanders were not poured into our ears by a young man, one of whose nine empty houses had been taken over by the government without compensation!

Then came the steamer to New York; and the young American, who need hardly have confessed: "Of course I have the capitalist and militarist viewpoint," as he went on, from his five weeks' knowledge of Mexico, to give the solution of all her problems. "When Pershing came down here, he should have made a thorough job of it. A lot of degenerate Spaniards came over here and spawned this lot, and the only real way to have any decency down here is to exterminate them and extend our boundaries over the country!"

Labor History in the Making

In the U. S. A.

(By the Manager, in Cooperation with the Board of Editors)

"HARD" COAL

IT IS a funny little shell game, that's all. Awfully funny—for the winner.

There are three parties to the game as usual; but in this case there are two victims. One of them knows he is being "gyped" and shouts aloud to the other. But he, poor fellow, is apparently deaf, dumb and short-sighted. He looks about with an imbecillic frown—not knowing which is his friend and which his enemy.

Yes, you have guessed aright. It is the annual hard coal game, which goes on toward the latter part of every summer. The short-sighted one is the much-talked-about "consumer." The coal is "hard" for him indeed. It crushes him—and the miner.

Evidence of this comes to us afresh—from where, do you suppose? The U. S. Coal Commission! The distinguished members of that body, whose prejudices are all with the operators, find that the railroad rates on hard coal are too high. They try to help out the operators as much as possible by refusing to take the miners' figures on the cost of mining. But even at that, the fact that the roads, who own the hard coal mines, charge more for hauling that coal than for hauling the soft coal, which they do not own so generally, is too much to swallow.

The Commission also finds that the operators' books are not correctly kept. It urges a uniform system of accounting—which the miners had insisted upon—and publicity of accounts. It recommends a re-examination of freight rates by the Interstate Commerce Commission and a new arrangement of royalties paid owners of coal lands. These royalty charges are constantly rising. They bleed both coal purchaser and worker. They help to explain why wages remain comparatively low, while prices soar and Culm Coal becomes so general.

But the Coal Commission does not dare look squarely at the only permanent remedy for this situation. It opposes Nationalization. Instead it puts forward a much more radical proposal—for the President to seize the mines when strikes threaten. That violent act can only benefit one group—the group which is now gouging the other two.

"Confiscation" is forbidden by our Constitution—and the meaning of "confiscation" is now stretched to mean the cutting into profits or property interests in anyway. If the President seized the mines he would not do so for the purpose of reducing profits. He would do it for the one and only purpose of forcing men to work at wages the operators, in the long run, would dictate.

The operators know that well enough. They know that any sort of "government control," short of Nationalization, plays into their hands.

See them in action at the Atlantic City conference with the miners. They refuse to recognize the union. They reject the "check-off," so necessary for the protection of the union. They quibble on every point, with deadlock resulting. It is deadlock that the operators want.

"Winter is coming," they reason. "Coal is needed then. We own all the coal. Every delay runs up the price. Every delay makes greater the possibilities of getting rid of our culm banks."

So the shell game is continued. The consumers suffer from lack of coal. The miners suffer from lack of work and wages. The Anthracite Monopoly gains. Only when the consumers and miners join hands—to put the industry on a "service" basis—will the shell game stop. The miners have suggested that very thing.

American Labor, in every other field, should back them up and see that the Miners' Plan is adopted. Nationalization, with three-party control—not "government regulation"—is the method that will bring Justice.

BUTTONS FOR COOPERATION

"BUTTON, BUTTON! Who's got the button?"

That is the question being asked of Illinois cooperators. The Central States Cooperative Wholesale Society—located in East St. Louis—has just opened an educational department. The Society, which has furnished goods and supplies to the retail cooperatives of Illinois and other states, has had its ups and downs. But still it has fought on. And now it has decided that the step which will make its way "straight and smooth" is educational work among trade unions and cooperators.

The educational department is the result, publishing a monthly magazine to be known as "The United Consumer." The first copy of the magazine is promised for August 10th.

It is here that the buttons come in. They are being sold to local cooperators—15,000 of them—as one of the means of financing the new department. They bear the emblem chosen by the Cooperative League of America as the mark of true cooperatives. It is a green pine tree, with a gold background. When this emblem appears upon the stationery or prospectus of a local cooperative society, you know that it is based on the principles that make for cooperative success. The word "cooperation" has been used so often in the past as a cloak for fake schemes of all sorts.

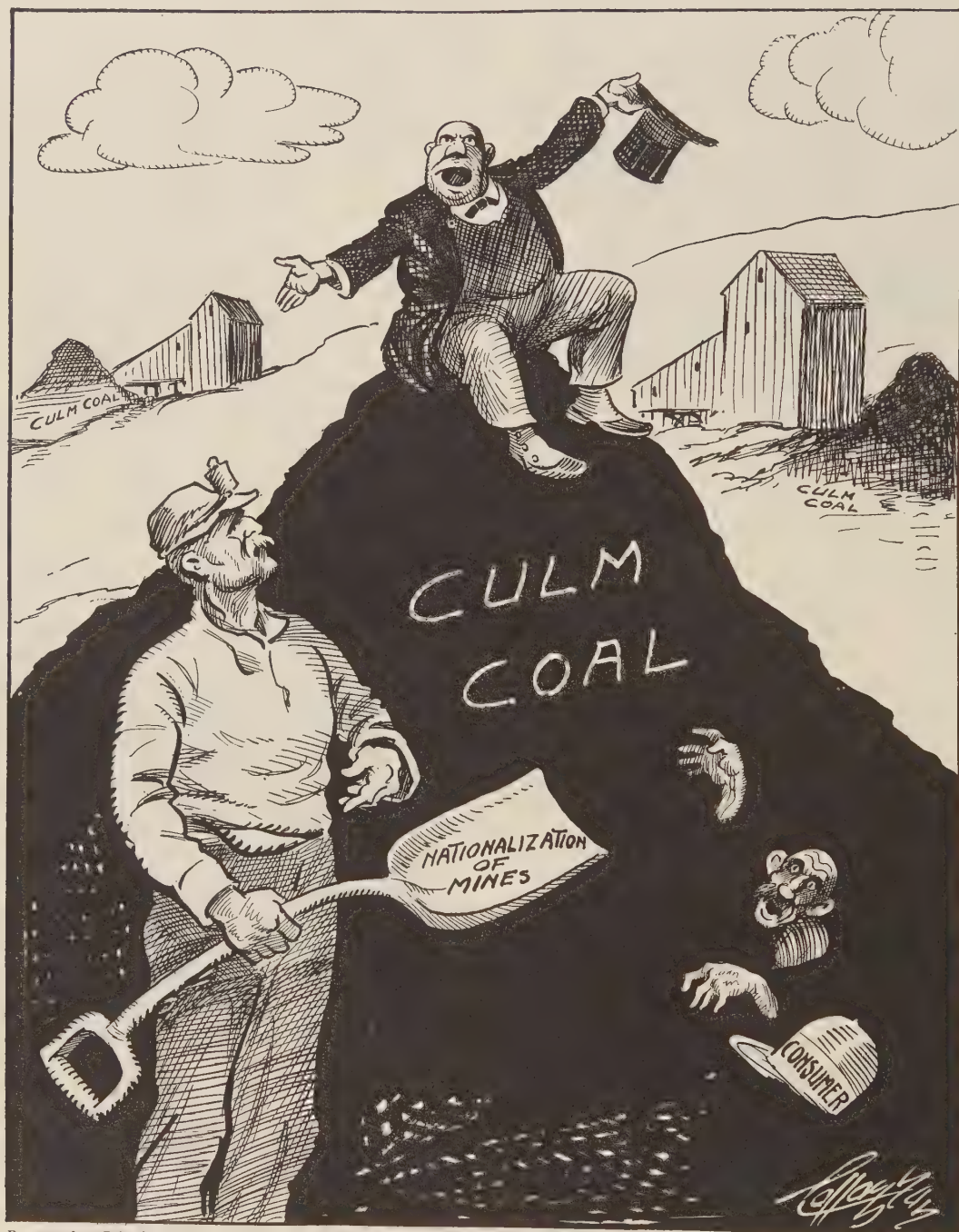
The experiences of the Central States Society—both up and down—make an interesting story, valuable to trade unionists everywhere. That story is told, by a member of the Cooperative's board of directors, in another part of this issue.

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The appeal which the Society is now making for an educational department is in line with the history of European cooperation. The pioneers in the Old World knew full well that a clear understanding of the cooperative movement by its members must be the foundation stone of its success. That is why it has grown and flourished in every country across the sea. This cue has been taken, also, by the Minnesota cooperatives—with like success.

In Pennsylvania Dr. Richard Hogue is to commence his work as secretary of the new Workers' Education Department of the State Federation next month. Labor colleges—such as those in Philadelphia and Portland, Ore.—which have been on the job in the past, are planning for bigger seasons this year.

Group education will solve many of the problems of both trade unions and cooperatives—and push all workers' efforts further along the road to victory.



Drawn for LABOR AGE by M. J. Callaghan

THE MAN ON TOP

Coal Operator: "Don't dig him out. You might hurt him!"

THE MEANING OF "SENATOR MAGNUS JOHNSON"

By WILLIAM MAHONEY

MINNESOTANS have not needed comic papers to keep them in good humor the last few weeks. The Eastern business press furnished the fun for them, with its explanations of the victory of Magnus Johnson on July 16th. Many and varied were the reasons given for that event. The Senator-elect's clothes, his speech, his family were all drawn into the picture. The big revolt of the farmers and workers was omitted as much as possible. Someone did not want to see that.

To those intimately connected with the contest for United States Senator, the result was not unexpected. The degree of support given the progressive candidate, however, was a surprise.

When Henrik Shipstead was chosen for the Senate last fall on the Farmer-Labor ticket, the politicians declared that it was an accident. They promised that it would not recur again. But they proved to be as poor prophets as they have been performers. They did not know of the changes that were taking place as a result of "hard times" and the prolonged educational work carried on in the state.

The victories of the farmers and workers during the past eight months in Minnesota is not the expression of a moment's protest. It is the fruit of a conviction that has come out of the part that government plays in the industrial affairs of Society.

Minnesota is a well-balanced state. The vote is about equally divided between city and country. No movement in government can succeed long without the support of both the townsman and the farmer. There is also here a good commingling of peoples—though Scandinavians are in the majority. Tolerance and progress, as a consequence, are in the air.

Upon this favorable soil have been planted the seeds of economic and political education for the past third of a century. Today some of the active voters and workers in the Farmer-Labor movement are workers and voters of the old Grange and Populist movements. The men and women foremost in the ranks of the new revolt are veterans of many a forelorn battle. They have learned their lessons well and bided their time. They have known that when economic conditions presented the opportunity, their ideas would bear fruit.

The populist, public ownership, and socialist movements carried on educational work right up to the war. Within the trade unions there was always an alert group standing for progressive programs. Many for years favored independent political action. When the Nonpartisan League came into the state—preaching political action as the salvation of the farmer—it was an easy step to join hands with the organized workers.

This combination began by trying to capture the Republican Party machinery. It took only a few trials to show the folly of this line of action. It was found impossible to get all the progressive forces to go into the primaries of one of the old parties, while it was easy to unite them on an independent party platform.

By unanimous action, the supporters of the Farmer-Labor Movement embraced the third party idea. It did not require argument. Experience had convinced them; and a united and harmonious—and successful—party has come of it.

The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota is made up chiefly of farmers and workers who have an intelligent understanding of economics and politics, and who mean to proceed along practical lines to accomplish fundamental changes. Their program is one of immediate changes, which will serve as a prelude to further and bigger steps forward.

It is fully recognized that radical and revolutionary undertakings often defeat themselves, and bring on Reaction. The Minnesota aim, therefore, is to go about the task gradually and continuously, until economic equality of opportunity is achieved.

This is not a purpose that can be accomplished in a brief period. It will take time to effect the desired end. This means that the work of education and unity must be carried on steadily. Then, will the mass of confirmed progressives be great enough to uphold the movement when a crisis comes.

Minnesota has started on the road to emancipation. It has glimpsed the goal. Its course is guided by determined men and women who will not recede. And each victory or defeat will be used as the point of departure for future endeavors for improvement.

The experience of Minnesota should serve as an example and inspiration for the useful workers of the nation to get together and make a beginning in the march towards freedom.

Minnesota is for a harmonious and close-knit party of progressives on a nation-wide scale. It is for a program, for this party, that will bring about fundamental changes in our present system.

WHITE COLLARS, ET CETERA

YOU who believe in workers' education have some cause to rejoice.

Along comes the Central Trades and Labor Union of New York City, to announce the opening of its own "labor college" in the Fall. In the heart of the big city trade unionists will go to school—in a trade unionist institution. The Brookwood Workers' College and the International Ladies' Garment Workers are cooperating in building up the new educational venture. The Educational Committee of the central body, under the chairmanship of Abraham Lefkowitz of the Teachers Union, is in direct control. Labor education is as necessary in the industrial struggle as labor banks, says the Educational Committee in an appeal to the unions of Gotham.

New York workers know about labor banks, for two are now in operation there. A third will blossom forth in September. They also know something of workers' education, from the six-year efforts of the Ladies' Garment Workers and the more recent but equally successful work of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

In the past, education and "white collars" were supposed to go hand in hand. But now the white collar workers are coming to the manual groups for information as to "how to do it." The "it" means better conditions of living, through organization. A move to organize the bank clerks of New York has been agitating the business press for the last few weeks. Of course, the labor banks are already organized; and the clerks in the other institutions are beginning to wonder why they cannot do

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likewise. Their low wages and bad working conditions demand this. The head above the white collar should have as much brains in it as the head above a soft collar or above none at all.

And that reminds us: "The plans for the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks' National Bank have been completed. It is expected, providing the new quarters are finished, to open formally for business on September 1, 1923." So states the "vice-president in charge" of the bank, J. C. Cardwell, in the current issue of the *Railway Clerk*. Mr. Cardwell goes to the new institution from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Bank in Cleveland. He is, therefore, thoroughly familiar with the workings of "cooperative banking." The Railway Clerks Bank will be a member of the Federal Reserve System, as is required of all national banks. It helps place Ohio in the lead as a labor banking center.

Thus Labor continues to branch out, in its effort to stand on its feet four-square. Education and banks of its own are good foundations.

"PRO BONO PUBLICO"

OF all the terms known to man, none brings up a cynical smile sooner than "for the public good."

As with patriotism, those words have been the cloak of the self-seeker and the scoundrel. Why, even Calvin Coolidge uses that phrase on occasion—when he wants to break police strikes, for example.

Railroad magnates and coal operators have also dinned it in our ears, when they wanted to put over a good steal on the "public" or a big cut of wages on the workers. At last have rail workers and miners learned to use the term themselves—in its true sense.

The only move "for the public good" that can be made in the government of industry is by putting the "public" in control of industry. That can be brought about by public ownership. So rail unions and hard coal miners advocate public ownership of their railroads and coal mines, with workers' participation in control.

Up in Canada they learned all about that long ago. The finest example of public ownership in this country is the great Hydro-Electric Power development of Ontario. There 247 cities have united to secure a great superpower system—greater than that of any private system in America. They have harnessed their water-power and made it produce electricity. As a result, they have established rates for themselves lower than anywhere else—as Carl D. Thompson of the Public Ownerships' League says, "unheard of anywhere else." The experts and engineers of the private companies cannot understand how these rates are so low, so they say. Try to talk to one of them about the Ontario system, and see him go up in the air. They are all afraid that other American cities will learn the secret. That secret begins with a "P" and ends with a "p". It is "Public Ownership."

Attention will be drawn to the things done up there, by the Public Ownership Conference, to be held on September 10-13 in the city of Toronto. This city is not only one of the chief units in the hydro-electric system, but also is one of the few cities in America with a municipally owned street railway of its own. Detroit, San Francisco and Seattle are the others.

Every local union that can do so should send a delegate to this conference. It is to deal specifically with questions which are of vital importance to unions, both

those working on public utilities and all the others, affected by public utilities.

GIVING AND RECEIVING

"IT IS more blessed to give than to receive." But it is also more difficult.

Measured by this standard, the Board of Directors of the American Fund for Public Service must be showered with "blessings" and difficulties. They are the trustees of the neat little sum of \$850,000—the gift of Charles Garland, who has "divested himself of practically all private personal property."

The existence of the Fund is known to many; but what it has done to date is not so generally known. An account of its work is contained in two reports, covering its operations from July, 1922, to May 1, of this year. During that time, it made gifts to various causes totaling over \$56,000; and made loans which exceeded \$129,000.

"The Fund," its first report states, "will be used primarily for enterprises coming within these two fields of activity: (a) Producers' movements, as expressed in the work of organized labor and farmers, and in work directly in their interest. (b) The protection of minorities." And it adds: "while the Fund has made rigorous business conditions in the handling of gifts it has tried to avoid making conditions as to the social policy of any organization. That would be improper and dangerous use of power. After being assured of the sound management of an enterprise, of the effectiveness of its directing personnel and the significance of its objects, the Fund has given or loaned without further question."

A unique feature of the Fund is that the work of administration is done by the volunteer efforts of the Board. "The routine secretarial work," it tells us, "is handled in the office of a public stenographer. The necessary legal services are rendered by Walter Nelles, counsel, on a basis of charges for each piece of work. Expert examination of the business affairs of enterprises applying for aid are made usually through the Labor Bureau, Inc., which bills us for each job. About forty consultants, experts in their own fields, very generously aid the directors by examining applications on request and expressing their judgment."

The gifts of the Fund are widely distributed among agencies of many sorts. Among them, for example, are the following: United Mine Workers of America, District No. 2, \$2,000 for relief of starving miners (and a loan of \$25,000 for strike relief); Brookwood Labor College, \$1,000 (and a loan of \$7500); Teachers Union, for campaign against Lusk laws, \$500; Workers' Health Bureau, \$1500; Federated Press, \$12,000; American Civil Liberties Union, for West Virginia free speech campaign, \$1,000; Women's Trade Union League, \$2500; Teachers Union, for research and publicity, \$3,000; League for Industrial Democracy, \$6,400. In addition, there have been loans to the Minnesota Daily Star, Seattle Union Record, Oklahoma Leader and other like publications.

The Fund expects to complete its work of giving within the next five years. During that time it has a great opportunity of service. \$850,000 is small compared to the big sums vested in the Rockefeller Foundation and in other institutions of that sort. But it can go far toward keeping alive efforts for the common people that might otherwise perish.

In Europe**The Soviet "United States"**

IT'S hard luck. Every time that the U. S. Senate is about to live down the reputation that Ignorance and It are synonymous terms, along comes someone to upset the whole business.

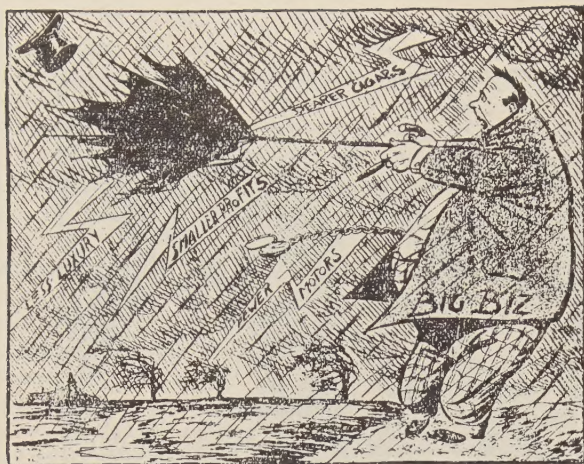
Senator Walter Edge of New Jersey, in a statement the other day, disclosed the fact that he does not know the difference between a "Soviet" and a "Bolshevik." He stated solemnly that there were too many "Soviets" in this country already, and that they were getting too much encouragement. If Walter does not look out, he will be calling a "Republican" a "Congress," and an "American" a "United States" pretty soon.

In the same way some of our statemen mix up recognition of Russia with imitation of Russia. They are two dissimilar things; and happily, some of our Senators are learning that at first hand. They are going to Russia to see things as they are. One of them, Brookhart of Iowa, has just returned. He finds the Soviet Government stable, after 5 years in control, the peasants working the land and cooperating with that Government, and Communism being supplanted by Cooperation. That the latter change is taking place, seems to be confirmed by an article by Lenin in a recent issue of the Press Service of the Third International. In this article the Premier urges the forces

in control of Russia to study Cooperation and put it into effect wherever possible.

In the job of meeting the rest of the world half-way, and of getting on a solid basis, the Soviet Government has drawn up a Federal Constitution. It is a combination of the former constitution and of that of the United States. A "union of Socialist Soviet republics" is formed, composed of Russia, the Ukraine, White Russia, and Trans-Caucasia. "The Soviet Congress" becomes the supreme executive authority of the Union, and a "Supreme Court" is also created. The Council of People's Commissars continues to exist—as the working arm of the "Central Executive Council" of the Union. This Executive Committee acts in legislative and executive capacities during the intervals between session of the Soviet Congress. (There is no need of special session over there.)

And to provide continuance of governmental operation, an additional body—the Presidium—is created, to act when the Central Executive Committee is not in session. The result is, of course, a highly centralized government—still built on hierarchical lines. But it is another step in the bringing of order out of chaos. Underneath all this machinery, the local soviets continue to function along lines of occupational representation—still dominated strongly by the minority Communists.



WHEN WINTER COMES
As the London Daily Herald Sees It

What a great area is brought under this new constitution can be seen by a comparison of the United States with the lands in the new Soviet Union. An article in **Foreign Affairs**, edited by E. D. Morel of the British Labor Party, states that this huge country "should be without delay restored to its old position in the civilization of Europe."

The Bolsheviks and the Western Powers have both found, the author says, that they have been "cherishing a delusion." The Bolsheviks' dream of "World Revolution" has not developed. The Western Powers' fond hope to crush Russia by "aloofness" has also gone a-glimmering. "Anyone who visits present-day Russia, whether he be an ardent Communist or a hardened capitalist . . . realizes that the revolution is over." He "sees no real or significant difference between Russia and the ordinary capitalist countries." However, "he feels that something makes Russia very different from the rest of Europe"—the result of the "Ismaelite position of Russia." "It's the feeling of unsettlement and of potential danger that makes Russia different from the rest of the world." The time has come to change that—by recognition.

THE WINTER STORM

BIG BUSINESS in Britain has become thoroughly frightened.

A storm looms in the distance, for the coming winter. It is the spectre of Unemployment—"which may lead to almost anything, you know."

As far back as April 27th, the Labor Party had urged a bill to provide work for the unemployed. But it was turned down by a vote of 166 to 142. Now, however, in the latter part of July something like a panic broke in Parliament, in view of a decided slump in British trade.

Some of the "honorable" members who had attacked Labor's proposals, now just as heartily attacked the Baldwin Government. They called for public work as a means to meet the situation. They derided the idea that the nation had "no money" for such work. They drew a sorry picture of the menace of a workless winter.

The Government was stung into action. The Minister of Labor hastily came into Parliament, with what he called a "novel" program. It provided for aid for but 300,000 men—when the present unemployment is al-

ready 1,185,000! The average throughout the last three winters has been 1,345,000—and signs seem to point to this fourth winter as the worst.

The Labor Party immediately declared the arrangements of the Government entirely unsatisfactory. The nation "ought to do ten times as much," said Sidney Webb. Others warned that a "drastic solution" was in store, if the problem was not settled aright in the House. Many called for "a root and branch solution"—saying that unemployment was "part and parcel of the present system." One proposal of the Laborites was for a 100,000,000 pounds sterling loan, for public works.

The "fear of the Lord," which the winter seems to have put into Big Business, shows that things are pretty bad. There is even talk of speeding up additional trade relations with Russia, to stop the slump. And then there is the Ruhr!

A STRANGE DECISION

WHAT do you think of this, good readers?

(It might be called Chapter II in the history of the Cooperative Wholesale Society strike. It well deserves the name, "A Strange Decision.")

The strike is now over. It has gone to arbitration, as the strikers demanded. The arbitrators were a joint committee of Cooperators and Trade Unionists.

The award has just been made. It confirms the reduction of wages imposed by the cooperative in April. It does this in the face of the attack on Labor from many quarters, for further reductions in wage rates. The decision seems, as the National Union of Distributive Workers declares, to be a great injury to Labor—not only because it hurts that union in its dealings with private employers. It also is a good talking argument against the unions in other trades. Even the **Cooperative News**, one of the organs of the cooperative movement, demurs.

The union scored heavily against the C. W. S. on one point. This was in regard to the "proviso" which had been put in the agreement leading up to the close of the strike. Under this "proviso" the C. W. S. had power, even after the award, to vary wages when it saw fit, according to other trade union variations, those of the "trade board" or "industrial court." The joint committee held that this was unfair to the workers, and would lead to all sorts of attacks upon them.

The C. W. S., apparently, wants the whole hog or none. It has declared that it will still insist upon the "proviso."

Meanwhile, Labor in general may well wonder at a decision which places such ammunition in the hands of Labor's enemies—particularly on the docks (where the men are resisting wage cuts in an unauthorized strike), the mines (where poor law doles are being handed out to the workers), and on the railways (where the shopmen are talking strike against threatened wage reductions).

A short time before the decision, the Minister of Labor announced in Parliament that "the fall of the purchasing power of the working class continues." He said that the cut in the weekly full-time rates of wages of nearly 7,400,000 work-people—for the year ending March, 1923—totaled \$15,000,000. From March until June, the wages of nearly 2,000,000 work-people were cut, for a total of almost \$1,500,000 per week. And the end is not yet!

BOOK NOTES

OUR FRIENDS, THE ENEMY

LABOR UNIONS, to make headway, must keep on the alert in regard to the plans and activities of their enemies. Labor unions have no enemies more dangerous than the groups of employers in each industry, styling themselves "employers' associations."

An objective but valuable study of the ins and outs, and ups and downs, of employers' associations is contained in Dr. Clarence E. Bonnett's book on that subject. Its exact title is **"Employers' Associations in the United States: A Study of Typical Associations."** It is published by the Macmillan Company, New York.

Among the associations studied are: The Stove Founders' National Defense Association, the National Founders' Association, the National Metal Trades Association, the National Erectors' Association, the Building Trades Employers' Association of New York City, the Building Construction Employers' Association of Chicago, the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, the United Typothea, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Civic Federation, the League for Industrial Rights, the National Industrial Conference Board, and the Associated Employers of Indianapolis. Every trade union should have this work in its library. Learn about your enemies!

MORE WAR ON WAR

IF the stream of books pouring out of publishing houses against War were any indication of popular feeling, then War would be dead forever.

In France a whole new school of literature is being built up on the subject. At the same time, the French Government goes on, unimpeded in its destruction of the Ruhr! In America and England the same thing is taking place. But is all this, perhaps, not after all the revolt of a few sensitive souls against the horrible scourge, rather than any general awakening to War's dangers?

An eloquent plea against War, and an ineffective one to those who will stop to hear it, is contained in **"War: Its Nature, Cause and Cure,"** by G. Lowes Dickinson. It is published in America by the Macmillan Company. "My theme," the author begins, "may be put in a sentence: If mankind does not end war, war will end mankind. This has not been true in the past. But it is true in the present. For the present has produced something new. It has produced science. And if science is the principal hope of mankind, it is also the principal menace. For it can destroy as readily as it can create; and all it creates is useless, if it creates only to destroy. But destruction is what war means; and all other meanings are made meaningless by this."

It is too bad that we cannot quote all this first chapter, and from other chapters—but you will have to read the book! It is simply and interestingly written, as the English know how to write when they want to do so.

One quotation must be given from page 32. It shows how a colorless enough statement from the "Kolnische

Zeitung" (Cologne News) grew, by passage through French, English, and Italian papers into a lurid tale of cruelty on the part of the Germans. This statement reveals strikingly how hatred is manufactured in war. In the "Kolnische Zeitung" the statement ran: "When the fall of Antwerp got known, the church bells were rung (in Germany)." In its final form, after being made worse and worse as it was copied, it appears: "According to information to the 'Corriere della Sera' from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down."

So is news made in War—based on lies, to hide its own ugliness. No wonder that there is rebellion against such barbarism, such as was seen among the conscientious objectors during the last war. Their case is reviewed by Clarence Marsh Case in a new book, **"Non-Violent Coercion,"** published by the Century Company. It goes quite thoroughly, and for the most part sympathetically, into the reasons for objection to war. It gives a picture of the various groups and sects opposed to war as a matter of individual and organized principle. It shows the basis for "militant non-resistance." The author rather disappoints by his uncertainty at the end as to what may be the value of coercion, applied without violence. Certainly, opposition to injustice is one of the leading duties of man. And opposition to injustice, which in itself avoids violence, seems the highest form of action.

ITALIAN COOPERATIVES

LABOR AGE readers will be particularly interested in Odon Por's **"Guilds and Cooperatives in Italy,"** just published by the Labour Publishing Company, Ltd., of London. It is a reprint, largely, of articles which he has been contributing to English magazines on the producers' cooperative movement in general, and the Italian development in particular.

The growth of the cooperative movement in Italy—especially the spread of the guild idea—is of interest to workers the world over. Por estimates that there are about 15,000 cooperative societies in Italy at the present time, excluding some 3,000 rural cooperative credit societies. These societies are engaged in all sorts of activities. He points to the fact that the three political parties that draw their support largely from the workers—the Socialists, Republican and Catholic (Popular) parties—are obliged to organize trade unions and cooperatives. He makes the interesting statement that D'Annunzio favors a guild state; and seems to think that the cooperatives can make an "entente cordiale" of some kind even with Mussolini. This sounds rather strange, after the abrupt way in which the Fascisti have attacked and destroyed cooperative ventures.

The book concludes with a historical review of the guild movement in Great Britain, written by G. D. H. Cole, the foremost English writer on this subject.

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